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NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

Scam, Scandal & Panic Dept.
ELVIS 'RACIST' ROW
KINGS ROAD RIOT

P.11

Ditch those semi-detached doldrums with The

MEMBERS

Out Of The Rut and Into The Charts — find out how on pages 30-31

Who should really be running the country?

VOTE!

in NME's Election Fever Special on page 16!

Ranking Tesco flashes the pearlies for PENNIE SMITH

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c/w SHAKIN' ALL OVER
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Taken from the album 'VALLEY OF THE DOLLS' CHR 1193
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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending April 9, 1974

Last Week	This Week		
2	1	SEASONS IN THE SUN	Terry Jacks (Bell)
4	2	REMEMBER ME THIS WAY	Gary Glitter (Bell)
3	3	EMMA	Hot Chocolate (Rak)
6	4	ANGEL FACE	Glitter Band (Bell)
17	5	EVERYDAY	Slade (Polydor)
1	6	BILLY DON'T BE A HERO	Paper Lace (Bus Stop)
13	7	YOU ARE EVERYTHING	Diana Ross / Marvin Gaye (Tamla Motown)
5	8	THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL	Charlie Rich (CBS)
8	9	SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE	Queen (EMI)
15	10	LONG LIVE LOVE	Olivia Newton-John (Pye)

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending April 9, 1969

Last Week	This Week		
1	1	I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE	Marvin Gaye (Tamla Motown)
2	2	GENTLE ON MY MIND	Dean Martin (Reprise)
8	3	BOOM BANG-A-BANG	Lulu (Columbia)
3	4	SORRY SUZANNE	Hollies (Parlophone)
4	5	THE BAD BAD OLD DAYS	Foundations (Pye)
14	6	THE ISRAELITES	Desmond Dekker (Pyramid)
7	7	GAMES PEOPLE PLAY	Joe South (Capitol)
11	8	MONSIEUR DUPONT	Sandie Shaw (Pye)
9	9	FIRST OF MAY	Bee Gees (Polydor)
10	10	WINDMILLS OF YOUR MIND	Noel Harrison (Reprise)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending April 10, 1964

Last Week	This Week		
1	1	CAN'T BUY ME LOVE	Beatles (Parlophone)
5	2	WORLD WITHOUT LOVE	Peter and Gordon (Columbia)
2	3	I BELIEVE	Bachelors (Decca)
3	4	LITTLE CHILDREN	Billy J. Kramer (Parlophone)
4	5	JUST ONE LOOK	Hollies (Parlophone)
7	6	I LOVE YOU BECAUSE	Jim Reeves (RCA)
5	7	NOT FADE AWAY	Rolling Stones (Decca)
9	8	TELL ME WHEN	Applejacks (Decca)
8	9	THAT GIRL BELONGS TO YESTERDAY	Gene Pitney (United Artists)
15	10	MY BOY LOLLIPOP	Millie (Fontana)

CHARTS

SINGLES

Week ending April 7, 1979

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(8)	IN THE NAVY	Village People (Mercury)	3	1
2	(1)	I WILL SURVIVE	Gloria Gaynor (Polydor)	9	1
3	(4)	I WANT YOUR LOVE	Chic (Atlantic)	6	3
4	(6)	SOMETHING ELSE	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	5	4
5	(3)	OLIVER'S ARMY	Elvis Costello (Radar)	8	1
6	(5)	CAN YOU FEEL THE FORCE	Real Thing (Pye)	6	5
7	(2)	LUCKY NUMBER	Lene Lovich (Stiff)	6	2
8	(18)	TURN THE MUSIC UP	Players Association (Vanguard)	4	8
9	(14)	SULTANS OF SWING	Dire Straits (Vertigo)	4	9
10	(23)	COOL FOR CATS	Squeeze (A & M)	2	10
11	(11)	DON'T STOP ME NOW	Queen (EMI)	6	11
12	(21)	BRIGHT EYES	Art Garfunkel (CBS)	2	12
13	(9)	KEEP ON DANCIN'	Gary's Gang (CBS)	6	8
14	(7)	WAITING FOR AN ALIBI	Thin Lizzy (Vertigo)	4	7
15	(12)	MONEY IN MY POCKET	Dennis Brown (Atlantic)	5	12
16	(10)	TRAGEDY	Bee Gees (RSO)	7	1
17	(16)	CLOG DANCE	Violinski (Jet)	4	16
18	(24)	WOW	Kate Bush (EMI)	2	18
19	(27)	FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS	Neil Diamond (CBS)	4	19
20	(—)	HE'S THE GREATEST DANCER	Sister Sledge (Atlantic)	1	20
21	(—)	THE RUNNER	Three Degrees (Ariola)	1	21
22	(15)	HOLD THE LINE	Toto (CBS)	6	12
23	(17)	STRANGE TOWN	Jam (Polydor)	3	17
24	(26)	JUST WHAT I NEEDED	Cars (Elektra)	4	24
25	(20)	PAINTER MAN	Boney M (Atlantic/Hansa)	5	6
26	(13)	INTO THE VALLEY	Skids (Virgin)	6	13
27	(—)	QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	Sham 69 (Polydor)	1	27
28	(—)	SHAKE YOUR BODY	Jacksons (Epic)	1	28
29	(—)	SOME GIRLS	Racey (RAK)	1	29
30	(—)	THE STAIRCASE (MYSTERY)	Siouxsie & The Banshees (Polydor)	1	30

BUBBLING UNDER . . .

IMAGINATION — Rocky Sharpe & The Replays (Chiswick); I DON'T WANNA LOSE YOU — Kandidate (RAK); LET'S FLY AWAY — Voyage (GTO/Hansa); SHOOT, SHOOT E.P. — UFO (Chrysalis).

ALBUMS

Week ending April 7, 1979

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(6)	BARBRA STREISAND'S GREATEST HITS VOL 2	Barbra Streisand (CBS)	4	1
2	(2)	MANILOW MAGIC	Barry Manilow (Arista)	5	2
3	(4)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie (Chrysalis)	25	1
4	(3)	SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN	Bee Gees (RSO)	9	1
5	(1)	C'EST CHIC	Chic (Atlantic)	9	1
6	(5)	THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	5	5
7	(8)	DIRE STRAITS	Dire Straits (Vertigo)	5	7
8	(7)	ARMED FORCES	Elvis Costello (Radar)	12	2
8	(—)	THE VERY BEST OF LEO SAYER	Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	1	8
10	(9)	20 GREATEST HITS	Three Degrees (Epic)	6	9
11	(30)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Supertramp (A & M)	2	11
12	(16)	DESOLATION ANGELS	Bad Company (Swansong)	3	12
13	(11)	BAT OUT OF HELL	Meat Loaf (Epic)	30	6
14	(12)	MARTY ROBBINS COLLECTION	Marty Robbins (Lotus)	8	5
15	(18)	THE BEST OF EARTH WIND AND FIRE VOL 1	(CBS)	13	5
16	(10)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel (CBS)	11	10
17	(13)	THANK YOU VERY MUCH	Cliff Richard & The Shadows (EMI)	7	5
18	(19)	FEEL NO FRET	Average White Band (RCA)	3	18
19	(—)	TURN THE MUSIC UP	Players Association (Vanguard)	4	18
20	(28)	NEW BOOTS & PANTIES	Ian Dury & The Blockheads (Stiff)	46	5
21	(—)	LIONHEART	Kate Bush (EMI)	10	12
22	(17)	MANIFESTO	Roxy Music (Polydor)	2	17
23	(14)	LIVE (X CERT)	Stranglers (United Artists)	4	11
24	(20)	TRB TWO	Tom Robinson Band (EMI)	3	20
25	(15)	EQUINOXE	Jean Michel Jarre (Polydor)	15	6
26	(—)	OVERKILL	Motorhead (Bronze)	1	26
27	(26)	SCARED TO DANCE	Skids (Virgin)	3	19
28	(—)	LOVE TRACK	Gloria Gaynor (Polydor)	1	28
29	(—)	THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING DICKIES	The Dickies (A&M)	6	19
30	(—)	STATELESS	Lee Lovich (Stiff)	2	21

BUBBLING UNDER . . .

DEVADIP ONENESS — Carlos Santana (CBS); TOTO — Toto (CBS); EVEN SERPENTS SHINE — Only Ones (CBS); LEMON POPSICLE — Soundtrack (Warwick).

U.S. SINGLES

Week ending April 7, 1979

This Week	Last Week		
1	(2)	WHAT A FOOL BELIEVES	Doobie Brothers
2	(1)	TRAGEDY	Bee Gees
3	(9)	MUSIC BOX DANCER	Frank Mills
4	(7)	KNOCK ON WOOD	Amii Stewart
5	(6)	SULTANS OF SWING	Dire Straits
6	(3)	DO YA THINK I'M SEXY	Rod Stewart
7	(4)	I WILL SURVIVE	Gloria Gaynor
8	(8)	EVERY TIME I THINK OF YOU	The Babys
9	(12)	HEART OF GLASS	Blondie
10	(10)	LADY	Little River Band
11	(5)	SHAKE YOUR GROOVE THING	Peaches and Herb
12	(14)	STUMBLIN' IN	Suzi Quatro/Chris Norman
13	(16)	I JUST FALL IN LOVE AGAIN	Anne Murray
14	(15)	CRAZY LOVE	Poco
15	(19)	I WANT YOUR LOVE	Chic
16	(11)	HEAVEN KNOWS	Donna Summer with Brooklyn Dreams
17	(—)	REUNITED	Peaches and Herb
18	(21)	LIVIN' IT UP (FRIDAY NIGHT)	Bell & James
19	(23)	HE'S THE GREATEST DANCER	Sister Sledge
20	(20)	FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS	Neil Diamond
21	(28)	SHAKE YOUR BODY (DOWN TO THE GROUND)	The Jacksons
22	(24)	PRECIOUS LOVE	Bob Welch
23	(—)	IN THE NAVY	Village People
24	(27)	LOVE BALLAD	George Benson
25	(25)	MAYBE I'M A FOOL	Eddie Money
26	(—)	GOODNIGHT TONIGHT	Wings
27	(30)	TAKE ME HOME	Cher
28	(—)	BLOW AWAY	George Harrison
29	(17)	I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S RIGHT	Evelyn "Champagne" King
30	(13)	BIG SHOT	Billy Joel

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

U.S. ALBUMS

Week ending April 7, 1979

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN	Bee Gees
2	(2)	MINUTE BY MINUTE	Doobie Brothers
3	(3)	DIRE STRAITS	Dire Straits
4	(4)	BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN	Rod Stewart
5	(5)	2 HOT!	Peaches & Herb
6	(6)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel
7	(10)	LIVIN' INSIDE YOUR LOVE	George Benson
8	(8)	BRIEFCASE FULL OF BLUES	Blues Brothers
9	(14)	ENLIGHTENED ROGUES	Allman Brothers Band
10	(11)	AT THE BUDOKAN	Cheap Trick
11	(7)	LOVE TRACKS	Gloria Gaynor
12	(12)	BUSTIN' OUT OF L SEVEN	Rick James
13	(9)	CRUISIN'	Village People
14	(19)	GEORGE HARRISON	George Harrison
15	(—)	DESOLATION ANGELS	Bad Company
16	(18)	THREE HEARTS	Bob Welch
17	(13)	C'EST CHIC	Chic
18	(22)	DESTINY	The Jacksons
19	(21)	LEGEND	Poco
20	(26)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie
21	(20)	ARMED FORCES	Elvis Costello
22	(16)	LIFE FOR THE TAKING	Eddie Money
23	(24)	THE CARS	The Cars
24	(15)	LIVE AND MORE	Donna Summer
25	(—)	WE ARE FAMILY	Sister Sledge
26	(27)	HEAD FIRST	The Babys
27	(30)	INSTANT FUNK	Instant Funk
28	(—)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Supertramp
29	(17)	TOTALLY HOT	Olivia Newton-John
30	(23)	TOTO	Toto

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

PENETRATION'S DANGER SIGNS!

PENETRATION have lined up their first tour of 1979, a 22-date itinerary spread over a month-long period, and including a major London appearance at the Rainbow. Their new single 'Danger Signs' is released by Virgin on April 20, coinciding with the opening of the tour, for which confirmed dates and venues are:

Hanley Victoria Hall (April 20), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (21 and 22), Bristol Locarno (24), Cardiff Top Rank (25), Liverpool University Mountford Hall (27), Colchester Essex University (28), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (29), Brighton Top Rank (May 2), Uxbridge Brunel University (4), Leeds Polytechnic (5), Sheffield Top Rank (6), Blackpool to be finalised (7), London Rainbow Theatre (9), Guildford Civic Hall (10), Cambridge Corn Exchange (11), Chelmsford Chancellor Hall (13), Norwich St. Andrew's Hall (14), Birmingham Top Rank (16), Coventry Locarno (17), Manchester Apollo Theatre (18) and Carlisle Market Hall (19).

In common with other acts, considered unsuitable because they fall into the new-wave category, Penetration have been banned from Mecca venues in the North-East and from Newcastle City Hall. They have tried to compensate by booking two nights at Middlesbrough Rock Garden, and are also seeking other venues.

Tom Robinson for RAR's Easter gala

TOM ROBINSON BAND have been lined up as the special star attraction in Rock Against Racism's gala concert at the Alexandra Palace in North London on Easter Saturday, April 14, which climaxes the current 'Militant Entertainment' tour. And it now looks as though the event will feature several more than the six acts originally planned. The Leyton Buzzards, The Ruts, Aswad, Belt & Braces Band and Dambala are already confirmed — and they are likely to be joined by John Cooper Clarke, The Angelic Upstarts and Dynamite.

Advance tickets for this show are priced £1.70, and they are currently on sale at several leading record shops including Small Wonder (Walthamstow), Rough Trade (Notting Hill), Ace Records (Islington) and Honky Tonk (Kentish Town). Tickets on the doors, assuming there are some remaining, will cost £1.95.

Most of the acts have now been confirmed for the final provincial dates on the tour. They are Merger, Belt & Braces Band and The Sunsets at Llanelli Glen Ballroom (this Sunday); Merger, Belt & Braces and My Willie at Plymouth Woods Centre (April 10); and John Cooper Clarke, UK Subs, Merger and The X-Certs at Bristol Universiuy (12). Shows originally planned for Exeter Routes (9) and Newport Stowaway (11) are now cancelled.

NEWS DESK

Stranglers in open-air gig?

IT WAS LEARNED this week that the first big open-air festival of 1979 is being planned for Scotland. The plan is for a two-day event to be staged during Spring Bank Holiday weekend on Saturday and Sunday, May 26 and 27, and it is known that many big names are being negotiated.

The Stranglers confirmed this week that they are seriously considering an offer to appear; and their spokesman said on Monday that "they will probably do it". Fairport Convention have already announced that they will be playing the festival as part of their farewell tour (see page 4), and it's believed that Scotland's own Average White Band are among other acts being lined up.

The organisers of the event are playing it very close to the chest at the moment, and will only commit themselves to a "No comment" — probably because they are still waiting for the local council to rubber-stamp festival plans. For this reason, NME has agreed not to print — at this stage — details of the exact location.

It is, however, a "natural" site with ample camping and parking facilities, well removed from any built-up area where residents might complain. The organisers have been working on the project throughout the winter, to ensure that every contingency has been catered for.

Another Rezillos offshoot

THE ADVENT of a second Rezillos offshoot group was revealed this week. As already reported, Fay Fife and Eugene Reynolds — former vocalists with the now-defunct Scottish band — are in the process of launching a new band with which they expect to make their live debut in the late spring. Now it transpires that the other three ex-Rezillos — John Callis, Simon Templar and Angel Patterson — have formed a band of their own.

And in fact, this second splinter group will be heard before Fay and Eugene's outfit, because they have a five-track EP scheduled for release by Sire Records at the end of this month — even though they have not yet given the band a name. A spokesman for the record company commented: "They have a name by the time the EP comes out. And believe me, it really is a *very* different group.

On top of this, the farewell album from The Rezillos themselves is released by Sire on April 12. It's a live set, recorded at Glasgow Apollo on their final date, and titled 'Mission Accomplished . . . But The Beat Goes On.' It features six tracks previously unrecorded by the group, including three stage favourites — 'Land Of A Thousand Dances,' 'I Need You' and 'Ballroom Blitz' — and there's the bonus of two new Callis compositions, 'Culture Shock' and 'Teenbeat.'

Iggy banned because Matlock is involved

IGGY POP has been forced to switch two of the venues in his upcoming British tour schedule. He was originally due to play Dunstable Civic Hall on May 6, but the local council has now banned him from this venue — because, says promoter John Giddings of MAM, he has a former Sex Pistol (Glen Matlock) in his backing band! And Coventry Warwick University on May 10 has also been pulled out, because the Students Union has encountered resistance to booking a new-wave act. The alternative venues are now Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (May 6) and Coventry Tiffany's (10).

IGGY

THREE MORE QUO CONCERTS

STATUS QUO, whose British tour schedule was announced last week, have added another concert at Glasgow Apollo on May 29 — making three at the venue. And they have slotted in a show at Port Talbot Afan Lido on June 15. Quo will also be appearing in the Dublin Festival on July 1.

WINGS MOVIE?

WINGS will star in a full-length feature film — if Paul McCartney approves the screenplay he is currently reading. It's been written by Will Russell, who was responsible for the hit musical 'John, Paul, George, Ringo And Bert', and it concerns the traumas of a band trying to escape from the pressures of stardom.

The story is based upon the Wings album 'Band On The Run', and the picture would feature all the members of the group, with McCartney in the lead role. Even if it is given the go-ahead, no decision has yet been taken on when shooting would start.

SQUEEZE AND POLICE SURFACE IN AMERICA

SQUEEZE have landed the plum role of support act on the extensive American and European tour by The Tubes, opening in New York this Sunday before coming to Britain for their previously-reported dates here. Squeeze, currently climbing the charts with their A&M single 'Cool For Cats', will be going out with new bassist John Bentley who joined the band's line-up last month.

THE POLICE are rapidly becoming one of the first British new-wave bands to make an impression on the U.S. charts, with their single 'Roxanne' and album 'Outlandos D'Amour' both in the Top 50 there. The band, currently touring America, can be seen in a repeat of their BBC-2 'Rock Goes To College' show tomorrow (Friday). And 'Roxanne' is released in Britain this week.

Adverts and ex-drummer in legal counter-actions

THE ADVERTS are involved in a dispute with their former drummer Laurie Driver, with each party taking legal action against the other. Driver, who played on the band's debut album 'Crossing The Red Sea' and was then replaced by John Towe, claims he is owed about £2,000 in royalties — and this forms the basis of his case.

It was when he was visiting The Adverts' management to discuss his claim that he became involved in a fracas with the band, and they are now accusing him of assault. Meanwhile, Driver has formed a new band called Succulent Youth, who hope to finalise a recording deal very shortly and to have a single out soon.

The Adverts play their first gig of 1979, and their last until their new album comes out, when they appear in an RAR concert at Leicester De Montfort Hall next Monday (9).

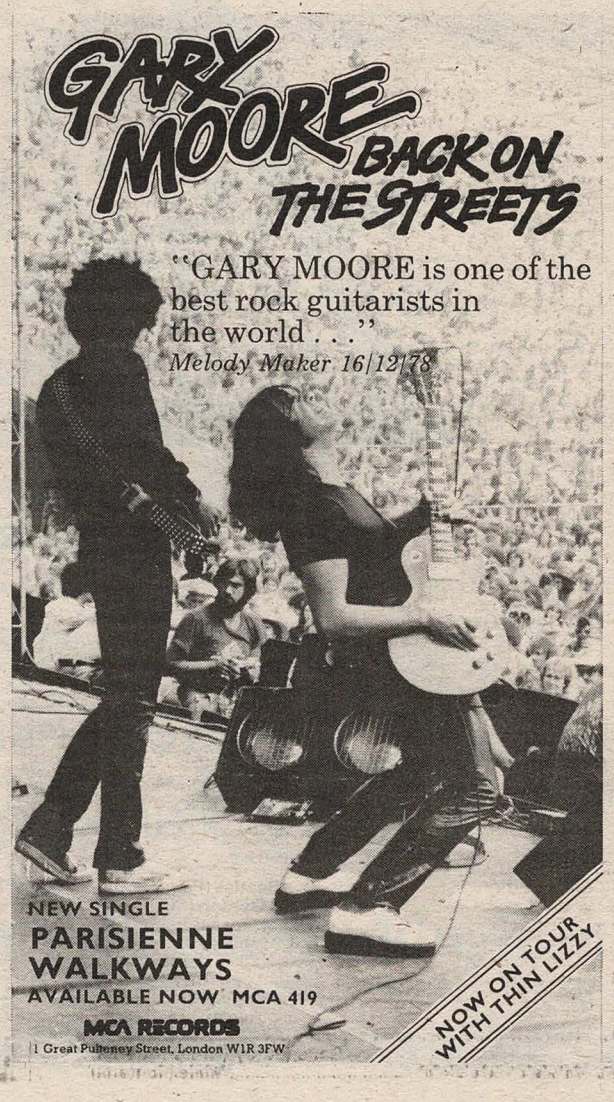
MEMBERS HEADLINING TOUR

28 dates confirmed

THE MEMBERS, who recently completed a round-Britain trek supporting Eddie & The Hot Rods, begin their first headlining tour in a fortnight's time. They've so far been set for 28 dates, including a big London show at the Lyceum, and there's more to come! The outing ties in with the release this week of their new Virgin single 'Offshore Banking Business', the follow-up to their debut hit 'Sound Of The Suburbs' — and their album 'At The Chelsea Nightclub' follows on April 12.

The group visit York Pop Club (April 18), Sheffield Limit Club (19), Cambridge Corn Exchange (20), Dudley J.B.'s (21), Jacksdale Grey Topper (22), Birmingham Barbarella's (24), Newport Stowaway (25), Bath Pavilion (27), Exeter University (28), London Strand Lyceum Ballroom (29), Leeds Polytechnic (May 3), Manchester The Factory (4), Liverpool Eric's (5), Dumfries Stagecoach (6), Edinburgh Tiffany's (7), Hanley Polytechnic (9), Retford Porterhouse (11), Canterbury Kent University (12), Guildford Civic Hall (13), Bristol Locarno (14), Plymouth Tops Club (15), Brighton Top Rank (16), Portsmouth Polytechnic (17), Nottingham Sandpiper (18), Reading University (23), Cromer West Runton Pavilion (24), Wolverhampton Lafayette (25) and Middlesbrough Rock Garden (26).

THE MEMBERS and friends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FEELGOODS IN TEN-GIG TOUR

DR. FEELGOOD are being lined-up for a ten-date tour of major UK venues in the late spring. It will run through the last week of May and the first week of June, and full details will be announced in a week or two — although it will definitely include a major London appearance. Also on the agenda is a concert in the Isle of Man to coincide with the annual T.T. motor-cycle races there.

The band will have a live album issued in May but, prior to this, United Artists release their new single 'As Long As The Price Is Right' on April 27. The single comes in a choice of blue, brown or mauve vinyl, each with the same-coloured Dr. Feelgood label and picture sleeve. And to complete the novelty, the sleeve depicts a close-up of a woman's cleavage, with a bank note protruding from the bra — £5 for blue, £10 for brown and £20 for mauve!

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

FAIRPORT CONVENTION have confirmed the first string of dates for their farwell tour. They play Plymouth Woods Centre (April 30), Penzance Winter Gardens (May 1), Exeter Routes (2), Cardiff Sophia Gardens (3), Nottingham Playhouse (5), Blackburn King George's Hall (6), Manchester Ashton Tameside Theatre (7), Southampton University (9), Birmingham University (11), Horsham Capitol (13), Sunderland Polytechnic (19), Sheffield Crucible Theatre (20), Glasgow Strathclyde University (26), Loch Lomond Festival (27), Slough Fulcrum Centre (30), Bradford St. George's Hall (June 1), Southend Cliffs Pavilion (2) and Croydon Fairfield Hall (3).

The tour continues overseas until mid-August, though they plan further British dates in early summer. Several of the gigs in this country will be recorded for a live album. As previously reported, Fairport have decided to disband after completing all their shows at home and abroad, mainly due to Dave Swarbrick's deafness problem.

On The Road

LEE BRILLEAUX in action with the Feelgoods during their Hammersmith Odeon gig last October.

LEW LEWIS BAND

LEW LEWIS REFORMER are playing a string of dates this month to aid promotion of their current Stiff Record's single 'Lucky Seven'. They visit London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle (tonight, Thursday), Sheffield Limit Club (Friday), Dudley J.B.'s (Saturday), London Marquee Club (April 8 and 30), London Kensington Nashville (10), Rayleigh Crocs (11), London Islington Hope & Anchor (13), London Wimbledon Nelson's Club (18), Chester Arts Centre (19), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (20), Retford Porterhouse (21), London Camden Dingwalls (22) and Leeds Fforde Green Hotel (27).

BISHOPS BACK ON THE TRAIL

THE BISHOPS have decided to go ahead with their planned May tour, despite the loss of Zenon De Fleur, who died last month after a road accident. Zen will be heard for the last time on the band's new album 'Crosscuts,' which was completed two days before he died, and is now released at the beginning of May.

It's preceded on April 27 by a single titled 'Mr Jones,' backed with 'Human Being' and a live version of 'Route 66.' The Bishops will be joined on the tour by Blitz Kreig from the Blast Furnace band and, with several more dates being finalised, gigs confirmed at present are:

Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre (May 2), Leeds Fan Club (3), Hull College of Education (4), Durham University (5), Cleethorpes Winter Gardens (7), Sheffield Limit Club (8), Stirling University (10), Aberdeen University (11), Edinburgh Heriot Watt University (12), Fife St. Andrew's University (13), Chester Arts Centre (14), Portsmouth Polytechnic (17) and Dudley J.B.'s (26).

CHILD

CHILD begin a 16-venue British concert tour in three weeks' time, visiting Greenock Town Hall (April 25), Perth Civic Hall (26), Glasgow Apollo (27), Aviemore Centre (28), Edinburgh Odeon (May 1), Newcastle Odeon (3), Bradford St George's Hall (4), Hull Dorchester Theatre (5), Birmingham Mayfair (6), Bristol Locarno (7), Cardiff Sophia Gardens (8), Oxford New Theatre (9), Southampton Odeon (10), Canterbury Odeon (12), Ipswich Gaumont (13) and London Ilford Odeon (14). Ticket prices at all venues are £2.50, £2 and £1.50. The tour ties in with the release by Ariola this week of the group's first single of 1979 — it's 'Only You', a revival of The Platters' 22-year-old hit.

CHRIS REA

CHRIS REA sets out on his first headlining UK tour at the end of this month, and his schedule includes an appearance at London's The Venue. The singer-composer, whose debut album 'Whatever Happened To Benny Santini' went Gold in the States, has his second LP 'Deltics' (produced by Gus Dudgeon) issued by Magnet this weekend.

Confirmed tour dates are Edinburgh Heriot Watt University (April 27), Glasgow Strathclyde University (28), Newcastle Polytechnic (29), Saltburn The Fillmore (May 1), London Victoria The Venue (3), London Hendon Middlesex Polytechnic (4), Reading University (5), London Kensington Nashville (6), Manchester University (7), Leicester University (10), Birmingham Barbarella's (11) and Sheffield University (12).

JOHN MILES

JOHN MILES, who is touring solidly throughout this month, has added another six concerts to the tail end of his itinerary in the light of heavy demand from the areas concerned. The extra gigs — again with Bandit as support act — are at Leicester De Montfort Hall (April 29), Lancaster University (30), Edinburgh Odeon (May 2), Southport New Theatre (4), Sunderland Empire (5) and Hanley Victoria Hall (6). Miles' new album and single, 'More Miles Per Hour' and 'Can't Keep A Good Man Down' respectively, are on release this week.

NEWS ROUND-UP

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON, the reggae poet, is the subject of the 45-minute documentary 'Dread Beat an' Blood' screened by BBC-1 tonight (Thursday).

LEYTON BUZZARDS appear next Monday (9) at a new club in Kingston, Surrey, called The Noise Factory.It was formerly the Eel Pie Rock Club, but has now been taken over by City Records. Also set are Staa Marx (April 16), Little Bo Bitch (23), Deep Throats (30) and The Specials (May 7).

STREETBAND play a charity gig for the dependents of the late Mike Patto at London Fulham Golden Lion tomorrow (Friday).

THE DAMNED have switched their date at Croydon Greyhound yet again. Originally set for last Sunday, then put back to April 29, it's now been brought forward to April 22.

JOHN DENVER is showcased in a BBC-1 special tomorrow (Friday) at 7.50pm, filmed at his Wembley Arena concerts earlier this week.

EDDIE & THE HOT RODS, having just completed their British tour, play an additional one-off at London West Hampstead Moonlight Club tomorrow (Friday).

BRITISH LIONS have lost their drummer-vocalist Buffin (a.k.a. producer Dale Griffin). He is currently looking for "alternative employment", and can be reached at 01-904 9683.

GEORGE BENSON performs the opening-credits song on the soundtrack of the upcoming Warner Brothers film 'Boulevard Nights'. Penned by Lalo Schifrin, the song is titled 'Street Tattoo'.

ELTON JOHN is to play five concerts is Israel in early May, as part of that country's Independence Day celebrations. Negotiations are also in hand for him to perform in Russia later this year.

WILD HORSES continue gigging at Wisbech Isle of Ely Technical College (tonight, Thursday), Scarborough Penthouse (Friday), Liverpool Oscar's (April 10), Chesterfield Coldwell Rooms (11), Wigan Casino (12) and Bedford Corn Exchange (27).

ABBA have agreed to play their first UK concerts for two years, and are currently considering offers from at least two promoters. They're expected to perform about six shows here in October.

U.K. SUBS top a rock concert at Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre on Easter Monday, April 14 (3.30-11pm). Also appearcng are The Crooks, The Books, 64 Spoons and Scandal. Tickets are available in advance priced £1.35.

FRANKIE MILLER'S Full House have added another two dates to their current British tour — at Bradford St. George's Hall (April 17) and Manchester Ardri Cinema (26).

JEAN JACQUES BURNEL has switched one of the venues in his upcoming solo tour. He now plays Bradford St. George's Hall on April 28 instead of Huddersfield Polytechnic.

VIV STANSHALL'S work 'Sir Henry At Rawlinson End' is to be the subject of a 90-minute feature film, being shot in July and August. Currently working in recording studios with Steve Winwood, Stanshall will have Bert Jansch's new band Conundrum supporting him when he plays Drury Lane Theatre Royal on April 18.

THE VIPERS, the Dublin band who are now based in London, are supporting Thin Lizzy on their UK tour which opened last weekend.

FISCHER-Z have new gigs at London Camden Dingwalls (tomorrow, Friday), Brighton Alhambra (April 18), London Covent Garden Rock Garden (19), Milton Keynes Crawford Arms (23), London Kensington Nashville (26), Birmingham Polytechnic (27) and Retford Porterhouse (28).

PETER GABRIEL has announced that he will not, after all, be performing at Wembley Conference Centre on Good Friday as part of the World Symposium on Humanity.

THE SCOTTISH MONOS play Edinburgh Depot (tomorrow, Friday), Glenrothes Rothes Arms (this Sunday), Kirklevington Country Club (April 13), Inverness Muirtown Motel (21) and Glasgow Art College (26).

PUNISHMENT OF LUXURY headline for two nights at London Kensington Nashville on April 20 and 21, but they have cancelled gigs at Cromer West Runton Pavilion (tomorrow, Friday) and Middlesbrough Rock Garden (Saturday).

THE MEMBERS

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THE WHO BACK ON STAGE

Concert in France in May, Britain in the late summer

THE WHO this week announced details of their comeback concert next month — their first live appearance since the death of Keith Moon and the introduction of new drummer Kenny Jones. It's being held in an 8,000-seater Roman amphitheatre in Frejus, near Cannes in the South of France, on May 12. The reason for the choice of this particular date and venue is that they tie in with the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, at which The Who's two movies are being premiered.

The picture 'The Kids Are Alright', tracing the band's 15-year career, has its first official screening at Cannes on May 13. And the following day 'Quadrophenia', the movie version of The Who's concept album, is being screened. So within the space of three days, they have the benefit of making their stage return and showing their two films — in a major event at which the world's Press and media will be gathered.

The first of the films, 'The Kids Are Alright', is now projected for a June opening in Britain.

As far as live UK dates are concerned, one major concert has definitely been set for early September "somewhere in England". Manager Bill Curbushley is at present considering several choices of venue but, in order to accommodate the thousands who will want to attend, the chances are that it will be an open-air gig.

And this big show is to be preceded by a few "select and secret" warm-up dates, coinciding with the release of the 'Quadrophenia' film. These will be in clubs and smaller venues — and of necessity, they will have to be kept low-key to prevent vast crowds turning up.

In the autumn The Who are off to America to play a string of selected concerts. And as forecast last week, a series of Christmas shows in this country will round off the year.

The soundtrack double-album of the film 'The Kids Are Alright' is set for May 20 release by Polydor (complete with a 20-page colour souvenir book) — it contains 19 titles and a full-track listing has already appeared in NME. The previously-reported maxi-single of three items from the film — 'Long Live Rock', 'My Wife' and 'I'm The Face' — has now been put back to April 20 release.

Farewell from Blast

BLAST FURNACE & Co. play one last gig this weekend — at London Camden Dingwalls on Sunday — before they all go their separate ways. Billed as 'Blast Furnace & The Legal Matter', they'll be augmented by various friends, "Scotsmen and Southend Senders". The show is partly to help cover the costs incurred by their recent court case (reported last week), but is also dedicated to the memory of the late Zenon De Fleur. Blast plans to return to live action in the autumn with a new line-up.

Reggae package tour

A REGGAE package called the 'Roots Encounter Tour' is on the road from this weekend. It features Prince Far I, Bim Sherman, Prince Hammer and Creation Rebel. First confirmed dates are at Liverpool Eric's (tomorrow, Friday), Cheltenham Whitcombe Lodge (Saturday), London Camden Dingwalls (April 11) and London Oxford St. 100 Club (12), but others are being finalised.

Rockers for Royalty

LONDON's Royalty Ballroom in Southgate, renowned for its rock revival shows, has arranged dates by two more veteran U.S. rockers — 'Wild Man' Tony Conn and Sleepy La Beef. Conn headlines a 12-hour Easter Hop on Monday, April 16, supported by Matchbox, Flying Saucers, The Wild Angels, The Shades and Dynamite; and he returns there for a second gig three days later (19). La Beef appears at Royalty on Thursday, April 26, and is also set for Guildford Star Hotel (27) and Carshalton St. Helier Arms (28).

Sad Cafe play three

MANCHESTER band Sad Cafe play three major concerts in the North-East next month, to mark their return from their first U.S. tour — at Liverpool Empire (May 20) and Manchester Apollo (23 and 24). Support act is new girl singer Shann Lee Parker, whose debut single 'Be Good To Yourself' is issued by Polydor this weekend. Tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) priced £2.80, £2.20 and £1.75.

Gibbons fagged out!

STEVE GIBBONS BAND are completing the final stage of their successful European tour without the services of guitarist Bob Wilson. He lacerated his wrist while trying to retrieve money from a faulty cigarette machine in Germany — when it failed to produce the goods, he gave it a hefty thump and succeeded in shattering the glass! He has now returned home to Birmingham to convalesce, but he'll be rejoining the band as soon as they arrive back in Britain, when they'll be thinking about playing some more UK dates.

Cliff Richard season

CLIFF RICHARD, whose current hit album with The Shadows was recorded at the London Palladium last year, returns to that venue next month for another season — this time without The Shads, but with full orchestral backing. Cliff stars at the Palladium for two weeks from May 14 (two shows on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the rest once nightly). Box-office now open.

OFF THE RECORD

● A special **Deep Purple** collectors item is released by EMI tomorrow (Friday). It's an album called 'Mark 2 Purple Singles' and is in purple vinyl. To ensure its collectors status, it's being manufactured to order only — which means that, after the initial batch has been pressed, the master plates will be destroyed.

● Three intriguing albums on the U.S. Shiloh label are now available in Britain. They are 'Luxury Liner' by the **International Submarine Band** featuring the late **Gram Parsons**; 'Sneaky Pete', the first solo LP by long-time Flying Burritos member, steel guitarist **Sneaky Pete Kleinow**; and 'Bluegrass Country' by **Mike & Jack Theobald.** UK distributors of the label are Mike's Country Music Room, 18 Hilton Avenue, Aberdeen (0224-44776).

● **The Mumps,** rated by some as New York's best unsigned band, have at last committed themselves by signing to newly-formed London label Clout Records. Their first single will be issued shortly, and there are plans to bring the band over for a tour.

● To tie in with his British visit, Charly Records are reactivating the single 'Roll Over Beethoven' / 'Send Me Some Lovin' by American rockabilly singer **Sleepy La Beef.**

● 'The **Billie Joe Spears** Singles Album', a collection of 14 of her best-known tracks, is issued by United Artists this week to coincide with her appearance in the Easter Country Music Festival at Wembley.

● A quantity of the double album 'The Story Of **Genesis**' has been imported from Japan for sale in the 36 HMV shops in Britain. The set retails at £15 and includes a colour booklet with lyrics in English — and Japanese!

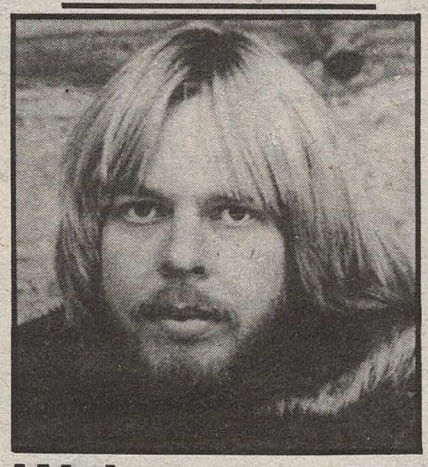
● After a pre-release campaign confined to the North-East, the new **Shirley Bassey** LP 'The Magic Of You' is issued nationally by U-A on April 12, followed by a single titled 'This Is My Life' (taken from the album) on April 27.

● **Brakes,** recently signed by Magnet, are in the studio this week recording material for an upcoming album. A single is planned for early May, and they'll be going out on their first headlining tour later that month.

● **Peaches & Herb's** follow-up to their recent hit is 'Reunited', issued by Polydor tomorrow (Friday), the same day as 'Body Heat' by **Alicia Bridges.**

● **Tubeway Army** have their album 'Replicas' released by Beggar's Banquet in mid-April, preceded this week by a single called 'Down In The Park'.

● **Crystal Gayle's** new single is the title track from her latest album 'When I Dream', released by United Artists on April 27. She will be featured in the BBC-1 show 'At The Maltings' on Thursday, April 12.



Wakeman's TV theme released

RICK WAKEMAN's 'Birdman Of Alcatraz' — a track from his 'Criminal Record' album — has been adopted as the theme for BBC-1's new Sunday-night drama serial 'My Son, My Son'. And because of this, A&M are rush-releasing it as his new single. Wakeman's new double album 'Rhapsodies', produced by Tony Visconti, is planned for late April release — it's said to be disco-flavoured, and contains such boogie classics as Tchaikovsky's 'Swan Lake' and Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue'!

● **The Peace Band** is a group of famous soccer stars — Gordon McQueen, Dave Watson, Bob Latchford, Viv Anderson and Osvaldo Ardiles, to name but five — who have got together to further the Hand Of Peace campaign on the terraces. The resulting single, 'Peace'/'A Peace Of Reggae' is issued by WEA International on April 20.

● **Boney M's** new single, issued by WEA on April 20, is 'Hooray Hooray It's A Holi-Holiday'. The group are currently in a Frankfurt studio, recording tracks for their next album.

● 'Sid Never Did It' is the latest Vicious tribute single. It's been recorded by **The Surgeons** for release on their own label — available priced £1 (including post and packing) from Surgery Records, 38 Springfield Road, Harrow, Middlesex.

● The debut release from Exeter-based band **The Scabs** is a four-track EP in a limited edition picture sleeve, comprising 'Amory Building', 'Leave Me Alone', 'Don't Just Sit There' and 'U.R.E.' Price is 90p (including p&p) from Clubland Records, 68 Longbrook Street, Exeter.

● **Earthbound** have a three-track 12-inch single out on Archway Records featuring 'Liberated Lady', 'The Robot' and 'Song For South Kensington'. The first two titles are also available on a seven-inch.

● Five-piece Australian rock band **Skyhooks,** newly signed by U-A, have their first British single released on April 27. Titled 'Women In Uniform', it's the first to be issued in two of the new coloured vinyls — flourescent yellow and green. The band's main claim to fame is that, in 1974, their LP 'Living In The 70s' became Australia's top selling album of all time.

● Latest signing to The Zoo label is a three-man band rejoicing in the name of **Echo & The Bunnymen.** They are currently recording a debut single for late April release.

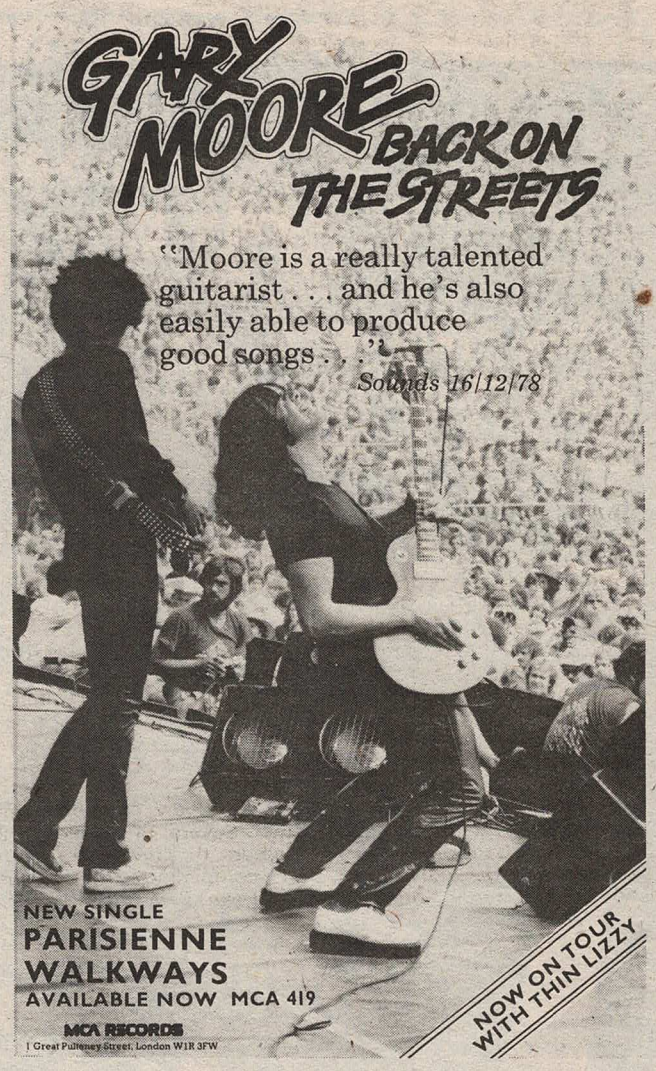
● Reggae drummer **Sly Dunbar,** at present working in Peter Tosh's band, has his own LP 'Sly, Wicked And Slick' issued by Front Line on April 20 — preceded next week by the 12-inch single 'Rasta Fiesta'. Other albums this month from the same label are 'Praise Jah' by **The Twinkle Brothers** and 'Cry Tuff Dub Encounter — Part II' by **Prince Far I.**

● Launched this week is the independent Initial Recording Company, to be distributed by Spartan. First singles are 'Stalingrad' by **Bachdenkel** (a Birmingham group currently resident in Paris) and 'Visions Of Dune' by Eurosynthesiser outfit **ZED.**

● **The Bee Gees'** new single 'Love You Inside Out' is rushed out by RSO Records this weekend. Polydor release another **Roxy Music** single 'Dance Away' on April 12, and the same label follows on April 20 with 'Shoe Shine' by **Jim Capaldi.**

● **Inner Circle's** new single, released by Island this weekend, is taken from their album 'Everything Is Great'. Title is 'Stop Breaking My Heart'.

● **The Dickies'** maxi-single—which, as reported last week, A&M release on April 20 to tie in with their UK tour starting a week later — is being pressed in banana yellow vinyl, and will sell at 99p. Titles are 'Banana Split', 'Hideous' and 'Got It At The Store'.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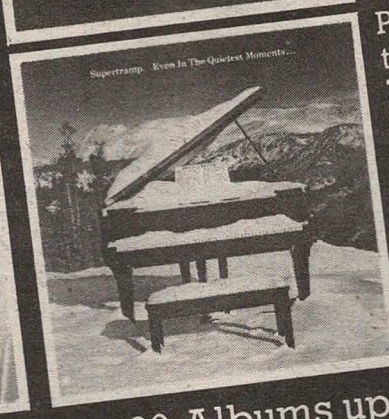

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Aussie Rock at Oxford Street

Skyhooks, Sebastian Hardie, The Angels, Doug Ashdown, Cold Chisel, Jo Jo Zep & the Falcons.

Stopping, Starting, and Falling All Over Again

Pic: GEORGE BODNAR

THE FALL: latest thrown beer can ratings make them among Britain's most embattled bands.

VIOLENCE grows, violence grows.

OK, we're going back. The Lyceum, February 25. The Fall, supporting Gen X, are repeatedly canned by one jerk in the front row. In exasperation they retaliate.

Chaos ensues. Harry George, who missed the beginning of the incident, writes in *NME:* "Blame it on The Fall". Mark Smith demurs: "George thought we were throwing cans indiscriminately at the audience, but we could see the guy who was doing it — he'd been canning us throughout the set".

Forward a month. Still at The Lyceum. The Fall, second on the bill at the misnamed 'gig of the century', face a constant hail of cans and plastic glasses from a few obnoxious yobs at the front of the audience. As they start into a new song, 'A Figure Walks', a youth jumps on to the stage and tries to hit singer Mark Smith. Smith turns his back, trips over the mike stand and stumbles to the floor. As guitarist Martin Bramah and bassist Marc Riley move towards the attacker, he scrambles back off the stage and disappears into the audience. The Fall continue with their set.

Mark Smith: "It was the same guy who'd canned us at the Gen X gig. I don't wanna give him any publicity, he's just a psycho. I find it strange he came back. I think he was after more press, and that's why he flipped — 'cos this time we didn't respond. But they're not gonna fucking win, those bastards."

The Fall have been accused of behaving arrogantly towards their audiences, but this is a misunderstanding of their position — which is simply to play their music in an uncompromising fashion. Their music isn't difficult to listen to; what throws the audience is the group's refusal to use any of the customary tactics of presentation. They employ no charisma, no charm, no theatricality. They don't even pretend to have fun. And they neglect to regurgitate old crowd-pleasers.

Mark: "We could go out with a set of stuff we've recorded and go down a storm. But we don't wanna do that. Nobody's got the right to lay that on us. Every band does it, and it's the death of every band. We don't wanna die like that. We're gonna fight it. It's our war, if you like.

"I think we're still trying to find *our* audience. Trying to get rid of the people who just wanna attack us, and also the people who only like us 'cos they think we're part of '77. The New Wave has become very limited — I'm amazed at the lack of vision — people still want us to play songs we've *forgotten* about; we've got to make the audience realise 'No'.

"There are too many New Wave bands who *pander* to the audience. I mean, Stiff Little Fingers last night — it was so bad: 'the audience knows best' syndrome. But audiences take as much as you give them. If you behave like a little creep on stage, they'll treat you like a little creep. It was terrible. I mean, that band *is* important, but have they got no self-respect? When they stopped because the drummer was out of time and called him in front of those people, I thought it was disgusting. If I was that drummer I'd have just got up 'n' belted Jake Burns. But no, it was 'Ever so sorry, ladies and gentlemen, the drummer's out of time'. I thought . . . fucking hell".

In cold print this may again sound arrogant, but Mark Smith is very agitated, very concerned; it's his livelihood at stake. And it's hard to disagree. To their credit, most of the groups at The Lyceum didn't go through these audience games, but Stiff Little Fingers *were* an exception — playing silly rock-heroic poseurs. They ended up looking and sounding like a third-rate version of an out-of-date Clash. And what's the point of that? Where's the fun? It's just ego: another bunch of would-be stars.

I INTERVIEW Mark Smith and Martin Bramah the afternoon after the gig. I'm offered various explanations as to why the other three members of The Fall are absent: they have nothing to say; they don't like doing interviews; past interviews with all five members haven't worked out; Mark finds it difficult to talk with so many people around; Mark and Martin are, as the only founder members left, the ones who know the most about the group.

In the event Martin says little and when he does speak it's in a hushed voice that's almost impossible to hear. The bits I do hear don't always seem to make much sense. But Mark talks a lot, sometimes rambling into incoherence. He also has a habit of ending his statements with phrases like "but maybe not" or "but I don't really know". It occurs to me, playing back the tape, that The Fall are a muddled and irritating mixture of waffle, idealism and contradictions. Mostly waffle, and mostly erased from this account. Talking to The Fall is like wading through a river at night. Nothing is clear, and there's nothing to *get hold* of. You'll have to take my word.

They're here doing an interview in an anonymous bedroom in an anonymous West London hotel because they've just released an album; I'm here because I like it. 'Live At The Witch Trials' received prominent and favourable reviews, speed of sales has apparently taken everyone by surprise. It was recorded and mixed in two consecutive days last December. One reason for the rapidity of this process was that The Fall had just returned, exhausted and half-starving, from the Scottish leg of the Hear And Now free tour. They'd actually set aside a week to record the album, but spent the first three days recovering their strength.

Another reason was that they have very definite ideas on how to make a record.

Mark: "We tried to do a track in one or two takes. If you do more, people begin to speed up just to get through it, and that't not good for our band 'cos we're not disciplined musicians. if we do a take and half of it is really good, I'd leave it like that. If we tried to get it all good, it'd just turn out average."

Rough and spontaneous are the values The Fall aim for. They have little patience with the "commercial" or the "well-produced".

Martin: "All the New Wave bands seem to think they've gotta get into the charts again. They've forgotten what it was about — all of a sudden you've gotta do this 'n' that 'n everybody's gotta be commercially viable."

Mark: "And it seem New Wave bands get this massive inferiority complex when they do albums. When they get into the studio, they're in some sort of awe about it. So they call in a 'good' producer or someone to tell them what to do.

"I find it incredible that they do, say, 12 fast numbers on an album. They think to make it sound like an album you just call in a good producer. And what you end up with sounds like over-produced singles. All the New Wave albums have been a disappointment to me. I thought the Pistols' was horrible.

"We wanted to do our album and get out all the stuff that we can't do as singles. The production was irrelevant really. We got Bob Sargeant in to help us so we wouldn't be at the mercy of the engineers."

Some of the songs on the album, like 'Frightened' and 'No Xmas For John Quays', appear to be based on specific incidents. Is that so?

Mark: " 'Frightened' is quite old actually. I wrote it when I was 16, just a thing I was going through. I used to be very afraid of things, like violence. 'Xmas' is about takers. It's anti-drugs in a lot of ways. A lot of people use drugs for getting off on 'n' they're just mind-fuckers, fucking their own brains. And they really try 'n' get your sympathy, saying 'Oh, I *must* have some barbs' or whatever. And there was this guy — not called John Quays — who just kept *wanting* things. It's about him really. He was a real bastard."

ONE of the most intriguing moments on the albums is the brief title track, a rap which has Mark proclaiming *"I still believe in the R&R dream, in R&R as primal scream"*. I ask him for elucidation.

Mark: "I regret doing that, it came over more serious than I though it would. But it's true. I still believe in a kind of purity, that we come from a long line of people who've tried to do things like that — like Gene Vincent — people who were in rock 'n' roll 'n' doing it well but whose attitude was different."

Martin: "It's like you're giving a part of yourself. You're not trying to be something else, but be as real as you can."

Mark: "Trying to leave summat really. The dream of doing that. Like, you can use primitive methods to communicate — which is why I'm in it 'cos I haven't got any skills and you need a backer in most of the arts — but rock 'n' roll is the only form where you can do that. Which is why it's beautiful. Rock 'n' roll isn't even music really. It's a mistreating of instruments to get feelings over. And the way people abuse that dream in the music business is terrible."

And the title itself? Does that mean you feel persecuted because of the dream? Mark wanders towards the boundaries of the comprehensible.

Mark Smith and Martin Bramah confuse themselves with new rhetoric but not GRAHAM LOCK

(At least that's his story)

Mark: "The witch trial is very relevant to me. Like I was saying before, this is our war, this is our witch trial. I also believe that things happen in circles, that sets of people go through things in different environments, but basically the same things. Like the witch trials get rid of all the creative people, and I think that's why you get people like they are now — because their culture is taken away from them, they're all smashed down.

"It's not so much that we're persecuted. But we are part of that voice. And there are a lot of people — like that psycho last night — who for some reason think The Fall should not be allowed to exist, which is ridiculous. I can understand anyone not liking the music — I mean, it grates on me now and again. Stuff like that does — but to say 'You can't do it' is wrong.

"I think a lot of people think of us as cheeky fuckers. There's still a big class thing in Britain. People think 'You can't go like that; you didn't go to university". Like the Mekons are all from Cambridge

Continues over page

All pix: GEORGE BODNAR

MARK SMITH

MARC RILEY

YVONNE PAWLETT

MIKE LEIGH

MARTIN BRAMAH

From previous page

(funny, I thought they came from Leeds — Ed.) 'n' they're playing avant-garde pop — which is fair enough — but I think we're doing more than that. But people assume we're not allowed to, 'cos we're not middle class."

Martin: "And 'cos we've got broad Northern accents 'n' don't say profound things when we first meet 'em."

Martin, I should say, strikes me as being a little untogether this particular afternoon. He says little, looks very pale, and stares into space. A little later, I draw my own conclusion, when he suddenly remarks "A lot of people don't get into our music as they don't seem to be into drugs like they used to. Our music takes on a different dimension then."

Ah. You take drugs?

Martin: "I take drugs but I don't need it — I don't need it to get high. I don't feel like a druggie. It's just like a holiday occasion. But it's definitely where the music comes from."

Mark desperately tries to rescue the conversation, and place the music on a more reputable aesthetic basis: "Well, it's more because of the paths which have been taken by drug music, which is good stuff. The Doors were a lot like that, and the Velvets. I'd prefer to call ours 'head music with energy'."

Martin: "It's psychedelic, but it's hard to say that because of what psychedelia's become. I heard our album on acid 'n' it really took off then. It didn't sound deadpan or anything."

Mark: "Yeah, but we don't wanna get into that scene like the mid-'60s bands where it's only good if you're out of your bleedin' head. Like the 13th Floor Elevators."

Mark laughs loudly and rolls about on the bed. Martin lapses into silence. I'm left to ponder the significance of this exchange.

IN *NME's* previous Fall feature, Mark Smith told Ian Penman that "If we sign to Polydor for two grand or something weak like that, or something like Decca, then it'll all have been a waste, we might as well have done it six months ago . . ."

Feeling myself aligned to the Penman school of methodology, I'm naturally interested in The Fall's current attitude to the music biz. I mention the above quote to Mark and ask if he still feels the same.

Mark: "That's not the point. It's a fallacy that a record company comes to you and signs you up. I think it's wrong to do that, but it hardly ever happens — the ones that do approach you are usually the shoddy ones. *You* have to go to the companies and sell your songs, which we could do any time of day."

The implication being you haven't — so are you wary of big companies?

Mark: "I think there are a lot of good big labels. The American labels impress me. At least they're honest about what they do. In Britain the whole structure is Victorian. The idea of sending a band out on a tour costing half a million pounds to make three quarters of a million is just a waste of energy. The Americans tend to just hype somebody, make a million and piss off."

"I heard our album on acid and it really took off. It didn't sound deadpan ..."

This strikes me as being a rather quaint definition of honesty, but still — does your favourable impression of some big companies mean your relationship with Step Forward is likely to be terminated?

Mark: "I like Step Forward — the only disadvantage is the facilities; they find it hard to get stuff out fast enough. It's something we've got to talk about. We've got time so we're gonna think it over."

The Fall are not 'signed up' to Step Forward. Neither party wants to be tied to the other in that traditional music biz manner. What happens is that when The Fall want to release a record they come to an agreement with Step Forward that the company will issue that particular record on terms that are mutually agreeable. So the relationship is largely a matter of trust. The Fall have total control over their own press releases. The important phrase for them is "to do it on our own terms".

Nevertheless. The Fall are now thinking about big companies. They have started to use an agent. They're in the middle of their first ever tour, and have played the Lyceum twice in a month. Do they feel they're in danger of being sucked into the biz?

Mark: "I know what you mean. To get on that Lyceum circuit would be deadly. The time we played with Gen X was the first time we ever felt we were just doing it for money — 'cos we were getting all those cans and just thought 'Let's do our half hour and piss off,' which a lot of bands do all of the time.

"All we're saying is that we can be our own bosses, and we can do it on our own. But we're in a very insecure position. Presswise, we get a lot of coverage but we're still only on, like, ten notes. We've got no driver, just two guys who help out as roadies. The Fall on the road is just nine people, and we're out on our own really. None of us ever made up to much. We're not academically outstanding or even especially practical. They are millions of kids like us, who *have* got something to offer if they could do the thing. We're just saying you *can* do it."

THE FALL came off the dole at Xmas. They're now on £10 a week each. Suggestions of a sellout would appear to be a little premature. Do they think their New Wave contemporaries have sold out?

Mark: "I wouldn't say they sold out. Things have just reverted to where they were before. I think a lot of people put their faith in something that wasn't there. The Buzzcocks always had their own mind about what they were gonna do and they've done it — not as well as I would've liked but . . . I mean, no way can you say they sold *out* 'cos they were never *in* to begin with. Pete Shelley was obviously into T. Rex, and Devoto obviously wanted to do Bowie and Eno. I never expected anything fantastic — that's just a heavy trip to lay on them. I did expect something from The Clash — I dunno, maybe they did it but I feel a bit disappointed."

Martin: "I think they find it too easy to be in this 'one of the boys' sort of thing, being all male. I think it's been good for us having

■ Continues page 40

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THRILLS

LONDON'S BURNING . . .

Police and punks fought a pitched battle in Chelsea's Kings Road on Saturday after the cops put a stop to a free Clash gig held to protest against the closure of Beaufort Market. Thrills observed the carnage.

ANTHRAX ORANGE and cyanide blue were the predominant scalp-tints at promoter Jock McDonald's impromptu punk-fest extravaganza last Saturday. An overnight word-of-mouth rumour about a possible Clash free concert at Kings Road's Beaufort Market narrowly failed to become a reality, courtesy of Chelsea's grizzly arm of law & order, but 2,000 people turned up anyway for an afternoon of small-cap *clashes* and the chance to get arrested.

For over three years, Beaufort Market has been London's central trading post for cheap(ish), imaginatively designed punk fashion and fripperies, and became widely accepted as a spititual Mecca for the capital's Blank Generation. But a contract is a contract, and Saturday marked the expiry of lease for dozens of independent stall-holders. To herald the market's close-down, and as a partial gesture of protest, McDonald, who ran a platter-stall in the market, had secured the agreement of five bands including The Clash to do a freebie on the roof of the building.

The whisper was out and news of the event spread through the grapevine like a rat up a hot drainpipe.

What had started out as a trickle of local colour on a street corner had, by noon, escalated into a near-riot situation, as bellicose battalions of fun-hungry punks spilled from their garrets to swarm in their thousands towards the bend-in-the-road locale of the market.

Fearing a huge conspiracy of noisy anarchic enjoyment was about to go down in Chelsea's chicest skid-row, society's bouncers-in-blue made it abundantly clear that they were having none of it. Obstruction is a misdemeanour at the best of times. But when a busy dollar-earning street is overrun by thronging bondage-clad extra-terrestials it becomes a Hanging Matter. Right, guv?

In a strategic effort to 'maintain orderly control' over the precinct, the police cancelled all leave for the day, and pinned an eleventh hour injunction on McDonald's lapel — effectively making the proposed concert illegal.

By the time The Clash arrived on the scene, it had become glaringly obvious that any music in the street would have to compete with the sound of breaking heads. With guitars and jack-plug in hand, the band had unanimously expressed enthusiasm for doing the gig and were eager to set up their equipment forthwith.

Unfortunately, the van-driver carrying the PA and drumkit had been repeatedly instructed by the cops to sling his hook, and was by now treading water around the neighbourhood, unable to unload the equipment.

Stories in some Sunday Smutrakers to the effect that about this time a member of The Clash was arrested proved untrue.

In the ensuing fracas between police and thwarted rock fans, over 70 arrests were made. It appeared to me that the cops were initially selecting their victims at random, and that their handling of the situation was not exactly a model of restraint. A photographer standing next to me was dragged across the street by two constables who promptly put his Nikon in a twist. Kids got sat on; kids got to ride in uncomforable vehicles. Tempers frayed, and there were mumbled threats of storming the building which the police had solidly cordoned off. When a Panda car was allegedly damaged by a flying bottle, reinforcements were called in from other constabularies.

In as much as the impending closure of Beaufort Market was a foregone conclusion, the day's turmoil might seem, in hindsight, to be a useless gesture for which a lot of people got clobbered for nix. And in the light of the very real repressive aggro that goes on in Britain's streets, from Belfast to Brixton, the Kings Road event would appear to be pretty small potatoes.

Above: STRUMMER mingles. Right: carrot-top dangles. Top: fans rush for cheap Public Image albums from Jock McDonald's barrow. All pix: NICK WESOLOWSKI.

Still, two positive conclusions can be drawn from the day's events: (i) the punk phenomenon is alive and kicking, and (ii) any spontaneous effort to rectify the mind-numbing boredom of life in London is likely to get trampled by a size 14 boot.

Bearing in mind that total fines are likely to run into four figures, and that some of the arrested kids will be hard-pushed for bail, McDonald has stated that a benefit concert is in the pipeline, and that The Clash have tentatively agreed to take part.

RICK JOSEPH

THRILLS

COSTELLO SAYS SORRY TO THE HAND THAT FEEDS HIM

Elvis Costello has admitted making 'racialist' remarks in a Midwest barroom brawl, and called a press conference last week in New York to apologise after his wildly successful American tour was jeopardised by numerous death threats

ELVIS COSTELLO And The Attractions' American tour has been blazing its way across America amidst media controversy and public delirium reminiscent of the Stones' '72 tour and early mop-top visits. Costello himself has been verbally outrageous in public several times and is now counting the cost accordingly.

The first incident occured in St. Louis last week where — after CBS had arranged for a prominent local radio station to sponsor his show there — Costello severely bad-mouthed the station at the introduction to 'Radio Radio', resulting in all his music immediately being removed from their playlist.

But what must be seen as Elvis one big mistake took place only a few days later in Columbus, Ohio, where Costello and bassist Bruce Thomas were involved in a barroom brawl with Steve Stills, Bonnie Bramlett and their band.

Initially a heated conversation broke out when members of the Stills entourage started accusing Costello of stealing his licks from Ray Charles, James Brown and other seminal black artists. Elvis' retort soon became abusive, and developed into a venomous diatribe about blacks in general. Thomas chipped in "Fuck off steel nose" to Stills, and the whole thing degenerated into an O.K. Corral situation, with the two Englishmen coming off worse through sheer weight of numbers.

The implications of this affair became apparent the next day when every muck-raking newspaper on the East Coast ran a story branding Costello as a "racialist". From that pointCostello started receiving abusive phone

■ *Continues next page*

'RACIST' COSTELLO

■ *From previous page*

calls and death threats at an alarming rate.

By the time the tour reached New York last Friday these anonymous promises of Costello's impending downfall numbered over 150.

With gigs at the Capitol in New Jersey and Palladium in downtown New York ahead (neither venue known for the gentility of its audience) a hurried press conference was called at the CBS offices, which drew over 50 journalists at less than an hour's notice.

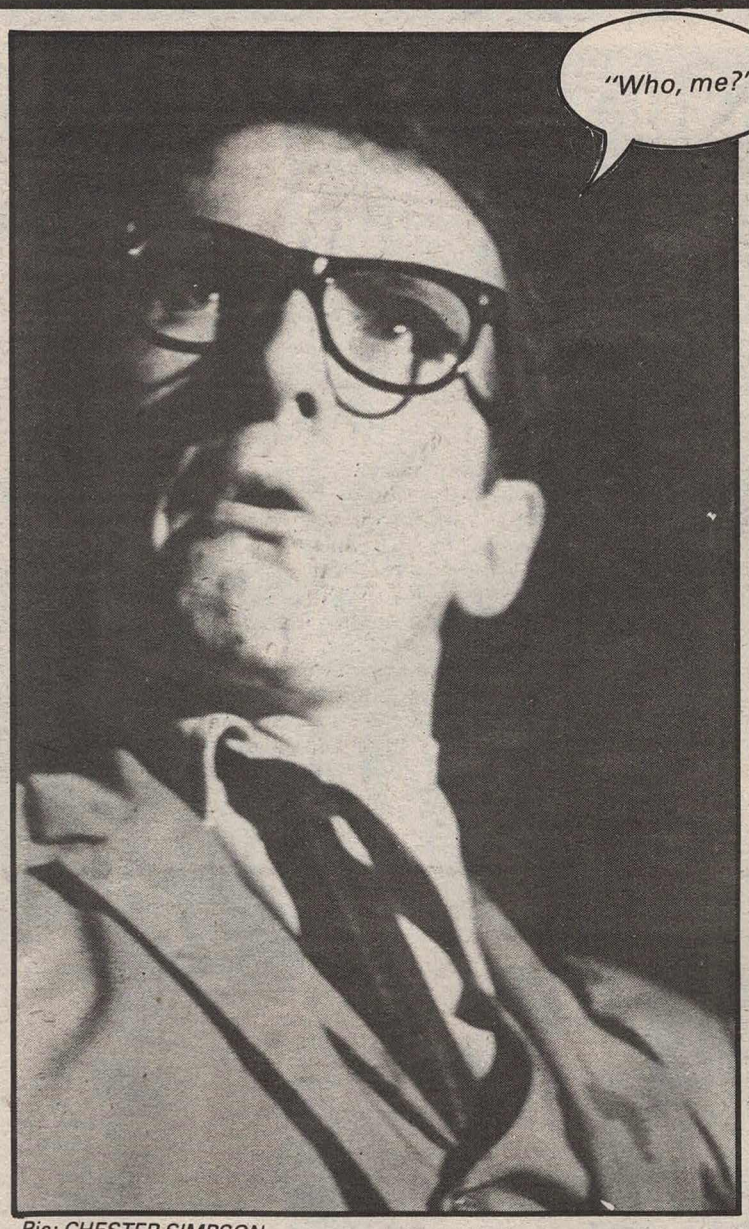
Elvis was anxious to set the record straight. He apologised about making racist remarks and put it down to having been wound up by the Stills crowd, who incidentally were responsible for leaking the story to the press.

"Well, you know how it is," he said. "One day I love America, the next day I hate it."

The press conference itself ran into trouble due to the presence of some black journalists who demanded more than the slender public retraction Elvis offered. But one way or another it seems to have done the trick, since at the time of writing Mr. Costello is still alive, albeit under a blanket of security.

With two weeks of shows in New England left to play, the mood of the Attractions' tour party must be described as one of heavy but deserved paranoia.

CBS, Costello's U.S. label, have been promoting the bespectacled one as an Urban Guerilla bad boy rock star, with a fair measure of success it seems. A lottery held over a New York radio station for twelve hundred Costello tickets drew a quarter of a million replies.



Pic: CHESTER SIMPSON

The lucky winners were picked up by 'Armed Forces' jeeps provided by CBS and driven to three surprise gigs Elvis played in various small New York clubs at six o'clock, nine o'clock and midnight on April Fool's Day.

Those sort of tour schedules could make a man tired and irritable.

NORMAN BAKER

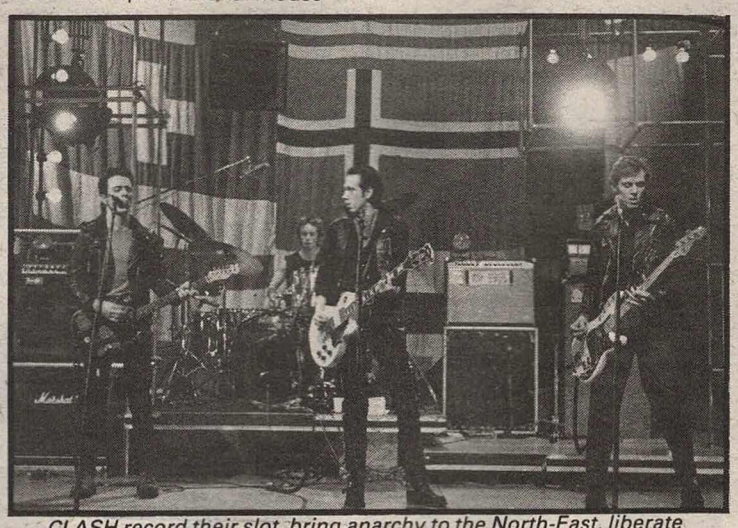
THRILLS

Cue Hegarty... Cue pop prog hit... Cue applause... (Queue here?)

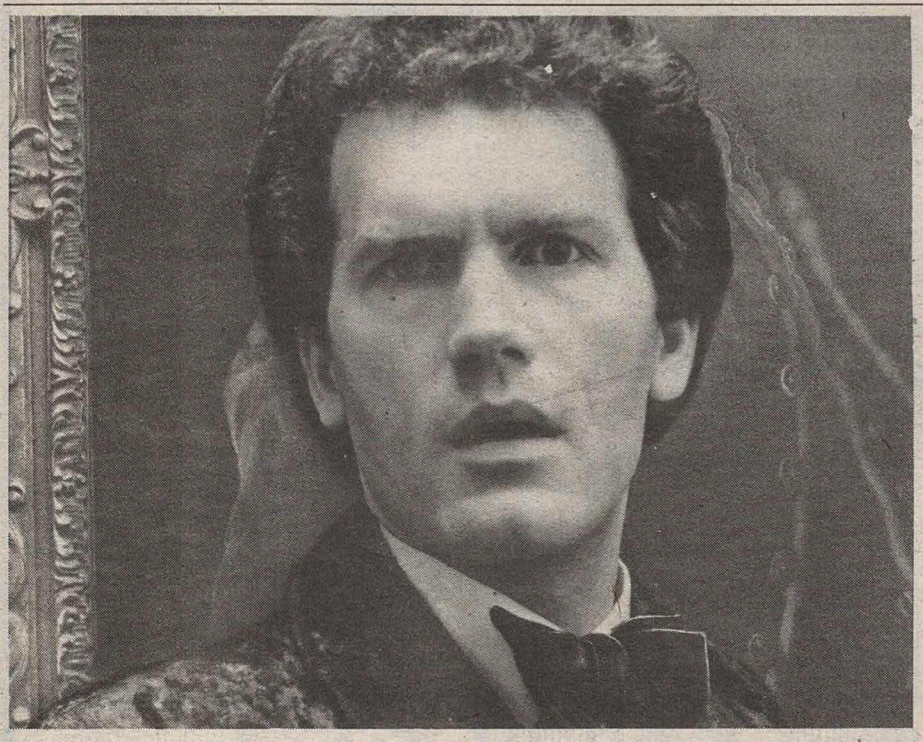
TYNE TEES Television wades into the growing search for At Least One Regular TV Rock Show That Somebody Can Be Proud Of when the first of their weekly 'pop magazine series' *Alright Now* is screened up north at 7pm this Friday. If the selected excerpts previewed in London last week were not deceptively flattering, TTV and producer Malcolm Gerrie can confidently expect their baby to be favourably placed soon near the head of the existing field. (Not difficult, we know, but still . . .)

Hosted with irreverent disregard for all known professional modes of presentation by ex-Dart Den Hegarty, *Alright Now* combines elements of *Revolver's* wayward continuity and *TOTP's* studio stage sets with some syndicated film clips and many specially filmed featurettes on the hidden essentials (roadies, technology of rock), topside ephemera (hair styles, fashions) and marginal figures (upcoming hopefuls, forgotten oldies) of the music industry in particular and teen culture in general.

As well as a reasonably sharp choice of guesting acts — Penetration and local heroes The Showbiz Kids are in the first edition, and following programmes include The Clash, Tom Robinson Band, The Police, Dire Straits and a special on The



CLASH record their slot, bring anarchy to the North-East, liberate Darlington from Fourth Division . . .



Robert always stands out in a crowd. He's got style, great personality, animal magnetism,

and bad breath.

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Who — *Alright Now* seems to have an untypically sympathetic camera crew (guitar solos are shown in finger-picking close-up, for instance), some novel ideas (split-screening to allow brief biogs of each group member to appear opposite the subject in action; loosely conducted 'interviews', involving the act, Den and the audience) and, perhaps most impressive, excellent sound engineers.

All studio guests perform live and yet, in the excerpts I saw, the sound was fuller, clearer and more dynamic than in any other pop/rock TV show. A bootlegger's dream.

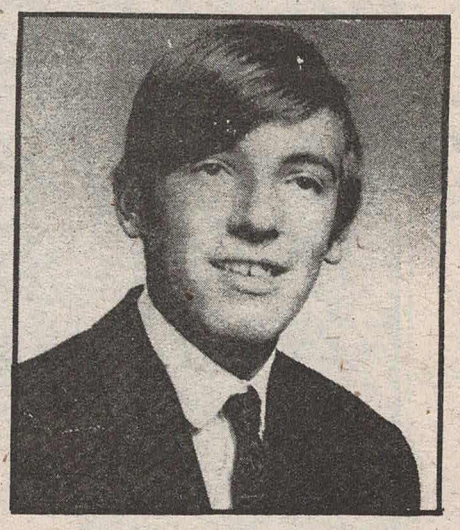
Two contributors confirmed the quality. In the Clash edition, Joe Strummer enthused, "It's just like a gig. No miming. You can just turn up and plug in. Great." At the preview, an Only One (a new live recording of their 'Another Girl, Another Planet' is *Alright Now's* opening theme) told me he was well pleased with the sound, as opposed to their recent appearance on the *Old Grey Nightgown*, when they were reduced to tinny weeds.

The only possibly dodgy concept in the show is its regular use of a small team of local punters, horrifically tagged The Koffee Bar Kids, whose function it is to loon about enthusiastically and occasionally comment on the acts. (Shades of "I'll give it foive.") If the series survives past the nine programmes that have already been filmed, methinks the Kids'll become increasingly painful to behold.

TTV has already sold four editions of *Alright Now* to HTV, Anglia, Border, Scottish, Grampian, Westward and Ulster TV (who'll all have scooped the orginators by screening the first programme by the time you read this) and Yorkshire TV is going with the series, starting Saturday June 3. Whether or not southerners will get a chance to judge the wares remains to be seen.

CLIFF WHITE

THRILLS



BLACKMAIL THE BOZO

IT WAS too easy — far, far too easy. Absurd that we should ever have tried pulling the wool over such an obviously transparent physiognomy.

Surprising therefore that some of you actually got it wrong! Haw haw — pretty dumb considering we gave you the answer on a plate. Piece of cake really — I mean, I knew who it was immediately, no doubt about it. Without hesitation I said, soon as I saw the picture, I said: "That's Loose Windscreen innit? Couldn't be anyone else."

Naturally, I was right.

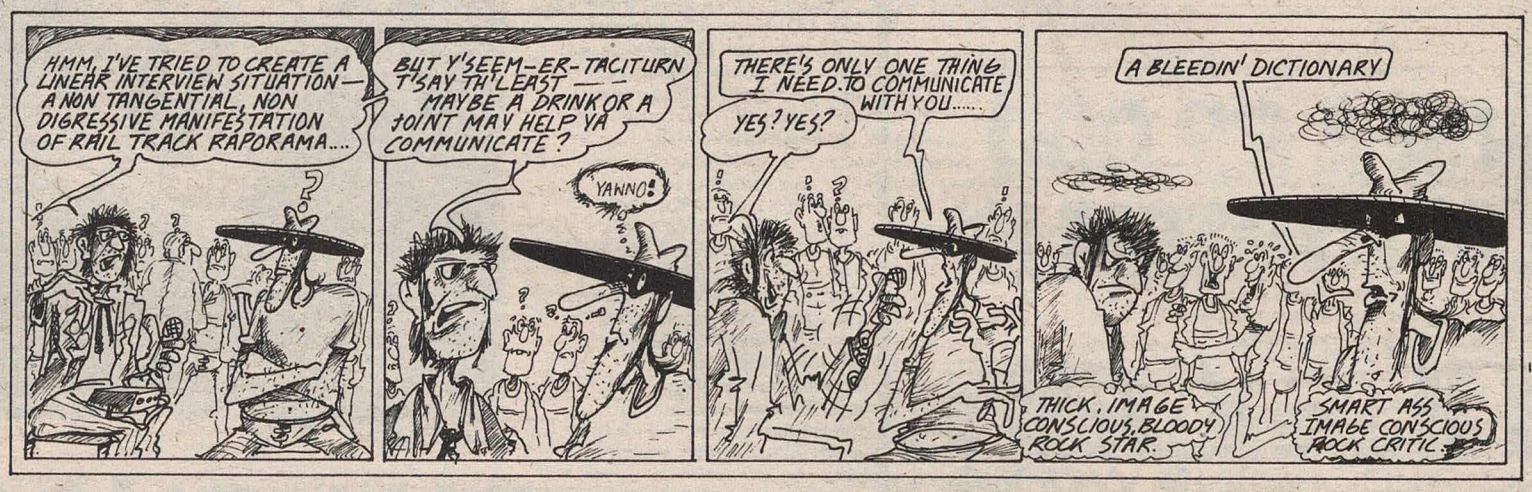
Shame then on the hapless individuals who guessed Steve Hillage and Todd Rundgren and Elvis Costello. Paah! Yaah, boo and sucks. Fools.

Suppose we'd better mention the hundreds of you who *did* suss the Bruce. Congrats to Jane Garcia, Lynda Bowen, Nigel Algar, Alan Fishers, Tony West, Ramon and Ducky and many others too numerous to mention. Give yourselves a hearty pat on the back and a stiff drink. It's the least we can do.

THRILLS

Pic: BOB GRUEN

The Lone Groover — BENYON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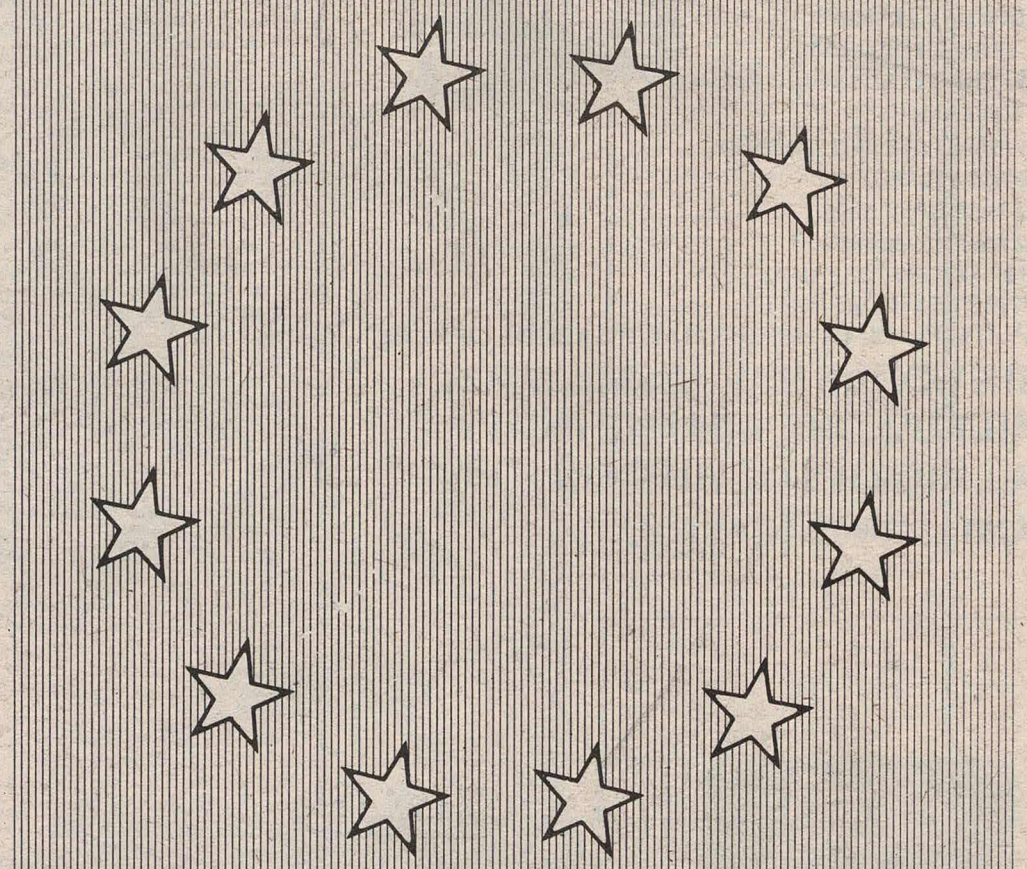

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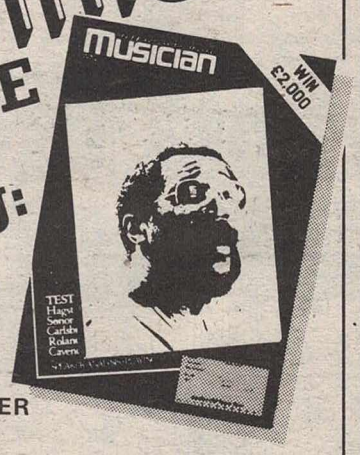

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Nina Hagen: Berlin's overnight superstar

NINA HAGEN Pic: ANTHONY AKERMAN

THE GHOST OF THE OPERA

AN EPILEPTIC Edith Piaf, a cross between Johnny Rotten, Maria Callas and Bette Midler, the ghost of the opera, a not-so-lean Lovich, hardboiled nightingale, Kate Bush on heat and so forth . . .

There is no fathoming the depths to which journalists can go trying to describe the indescribable in the inevitable cliches.

The Nina Hagen Band can loosely be described as new wave. Based in West Berlin, they have a vocalist who can sound like a demented crow or a King's College castrato. Her greatest asset is the ability to retch, scream and gurgle in turn and roll an R for longer than any human being this side of the late Billy Stewart.

German and Dutch writers from all manner of publications — from *Tit Bits* to serious socialist — have spent the last few months grappling with the problem of describing the unique talents of the latest continental superstar.

People either love Nina Hagen or they loathe her.

Some people are irritated beyond reason by her habit of using her trained operatic voice to make noises which would sound vageuly normal coming from a pregnant sperm whale or a teetotal hypochondriac after a night on the tiles. Others are captivated by it.

Her political and pornographic lyrics have led Germany's top rock TV show to ban her eternally. But they have also led to her adoption as a heroine of the Women's Movement.

"We are all feminists, because men need to be emancipated too", the band chorus when I remark that many Female Feminists regard the two F's as inseperable.

The band include a few oldies in their repertoire ('My Way', 'The Love Of A Boy Can Turn A Girl Into A Woman' — ha ha, and 'My Generation') but most of the songs are written by Nina and the band. They are hypes on sex, death, sex, politics, sex, poetry and sex, are spat out in the kind of German guaranteed to fail 'O' level and liberally interspersed with noises which could only emanate from the hell Nina so readily admits she will end up in. She also readily admits to having had abortions, falling in love with mini-skirted rubber-trousered (female) punks and having an aversion to chauvinistic men.

Nina began her career singing thigh-slapping schlager musak before graduating to Janis Joplin and a year's classical singing training — "Essential if you're going to sing for two hours and not give up after three numbers like Eric Burdon."

She then completed her education by spending a few months in London studying the antics of her friend Ariana Forster and The Slits, who now have a number of Forster/Hagen songs in their repertoire.

If CBS's publicity blurb is to be believed, Johnny Lydon thought she had "immense class" in his Rotten days and Frank Zappa and David Bowie are among those who have fallen under her demonic spell.

The success of her first LP in Holland can only be described as staggering. The Dutch have a known aversion to German, and three months ago it was inconceivable that a German band singing in German could become the chief topic of conversation in rock music circles.

Their second LP is due in September, but the Anglo-Saxon world is going to have to wait for the third, some time next year — with Nina's lyrics translated by Bowie and Zappa.

It is of course totally unfair to the rest of the band — a self proclaimed communist collective — to concentrate on the hypnotic powers of their bisexual vocalist ("My eyes are my second most important feature"), but then who said Deborah Harry was Blondie?

Bernhard Potschka, Manfred Praeker and Herwin Mitteregger served their apprenticeship in Lokomitif Kreuzberg, a TRB-style political rock band from West Berlin. Their reputation straddled the Wall after their appearance at the notorious World Youth Festival in East Berlin four years ago. Reinhold Heil added his jazz experience on keyboards to create one of the tightest machines on the continent.

There is little left to say except rush out to your nearest import dealer and buy the record — 'Nina Hagen Band'. Then write to CBS demanding translations of the lyrics. You may of course still be left wondering about the secret of Nina Hagen's rapid rise to fame — well, far be it from me to deny you the juicy details which have made her the darling of the continental press.

Nina was born (11/3/55), bred and misled in *East* Berlin until deciding to leave only two years ago. The East German authorities seemed only too eager to grant a visa to this articulate and furthermore socialist dissident. Especially because the man she had spent most of her life regarding as her father, Wolf Biermann, had already been exiled to the West as the least desirable form of life: a dissident communist folk singer.

Will Nina Hagen become the Left's answer to Alexander Solzhenitsyn?

MARTIN CLEAVER

THRILLS

I was pregnant, had to puke
Took pills, I don't want no kids
Why should I do female duty?
For who? For them? For you? For me?
Not for you, not for me, I have no duty!
— from 'Unbeschreiblich Weiblich' by Nina Hagen

NINA HAGEN BAND (L-R): Herwig, Manne, Potsch, Nina, Reinhold. Badges courtesy Dutch RAR. Pic: ANTHONY AKERMAN

LOVE SEX, HATE SEXISM? . . .

Rock Against Sexism gig

SUBJECT TO confirmation Rock Against Sexism holds it inaugural gig on April 6 at Dingwalls. The line-up includes Carol Grimes and other Rock Against Racism associates.

RAS was formed last November and lists four main objectives: to fight sexism in rock music and to use music to fight sexism at large; to challenge stereotyped images and to promote a more positive image of women in music; to promote women's bands and to fight against the exploitation of women in advertising or on stage.

CAROL GRIMES, first lady of rock in good causes. Pic: PENNIE SMITH.

Noble aims, well and true. Anybody who thinks double standards don't exist in today's 'progressive' scene need check no further than their local venue.

Point is, tho', the six pages of RAS literature I have been given harbour some startling — if not downright uneasy — implications. What begins on page one as a sound, logical recount of women's bus-stop standing in the music scene ends up a hysterical rampage through history equating current music with rape, plunder and carnage and blaming it on men from Henry VIII to Nick Kent.

This silly over-reaction trivialises a worthy subject and, besides, name-calling is bad manners. Sexism is a political issue; it requires method and technique to combat. To fight a political issue on emotional terms, however justified, is a debilitating and bitter stance, and wide open to passionate inaccuracies.

"Rock & Roll's always stood for degrading women" screams the hand-out. Funny, I thought 'Rock Around The Clock' was 'bout dancing and timepieces. And am I really supposed to blame 5% of teen-age girls' deaths through anorexia nervosa on the ineffectual likes of The Bee Gees? No, of course not, no more than I can seriously believe that by choosing to step out in fancy clothes I am only reinforcing rock stereotypes.

Perhaps all this hysteria is nothing more than embryonic confusion which time and exposure will channel; certainly the rigours of organising a prestigious gig are a sobering enough task. But one important criterion has yet to be established— just what exactly is sexism in music? Rock Against Racism has it cut and dried; battlelines can be drawn.

But when is a slag nothing more than a loser's lament? Much as I hate to give more exposure to such as Jean Jacques Burnel, in his *NME* interview the boy made a point. Some 'Wham Bam Thank God I'm A Man' songs are not chauvinistic rallying cries as much as the pitiful bansheeings of a victim of romance. And you don't have to be a superstud to know the tricks of revenge.

Taken on the most fundamental level, to completely eradicate sexism would mean tampering with the whole structure of modern day music. Bo Diddley might preen and roar out for his women to git on with the grits, but I for one ain't giving up that man's music for anybody's cause. Rock and roll is, however, all about sex — so what is sexy and what sexism? At times everyone's a sex object, or else mighty lonely when the lights go out, so that aspect by rights should

Typical specimen of sexist hard rock band member.

be celebrated, sensitised and eulogised. 'Do You Think I'm Brainy?' just doesn't cut it.

But certainly the most uneasy implication lies in RAS's hope of getting participating bands to sign an 'anti-sexist' contract clause before each gig. Whatever that may mean, its inherent censorship is a frightening thought. Big Sister is watching, and wearing no dancing shoes — otherwise she'd know rock music is all about outrage, and outrageousness. No way can you kick ass with a contract clause, however well intentioned.

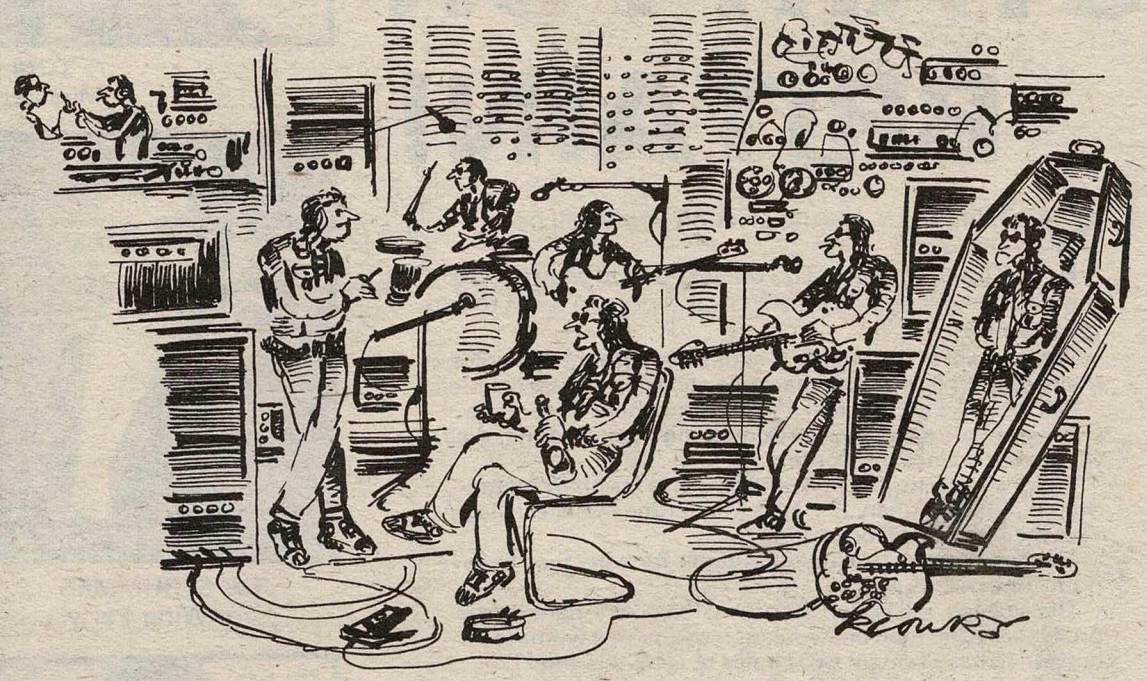
Rock Against Sexism has possibilities; it carries with it a political urgency that shouldn't be avoided. Reckless emotionalism, on the other hand, must be. Take a tip from the Lysistrata; sweet fire can work wonders. Aimed, restrained, well-organised and oh yeah, heavy on the bass beat, girls.

See you at the gig.

MARTHA ZENFELL

THRILLS

LOWRY



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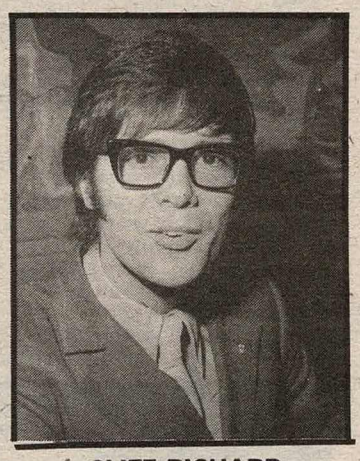
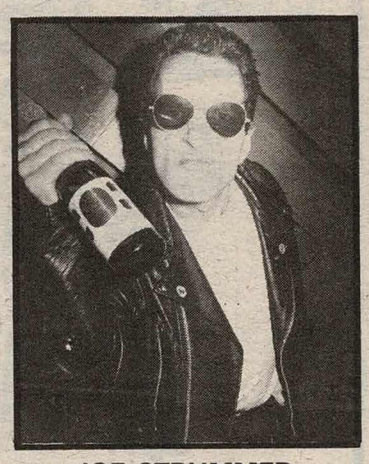
T. ROBINSON	
S. SIOUX	
J. STRUMMER	
Any other nominations	

To:— Returning Officer, NME, 5-7 Carnaby St., London W1

TOM ROBINSON
Minister Of Transport



CLIFF RICHARD
Festival Of Plight

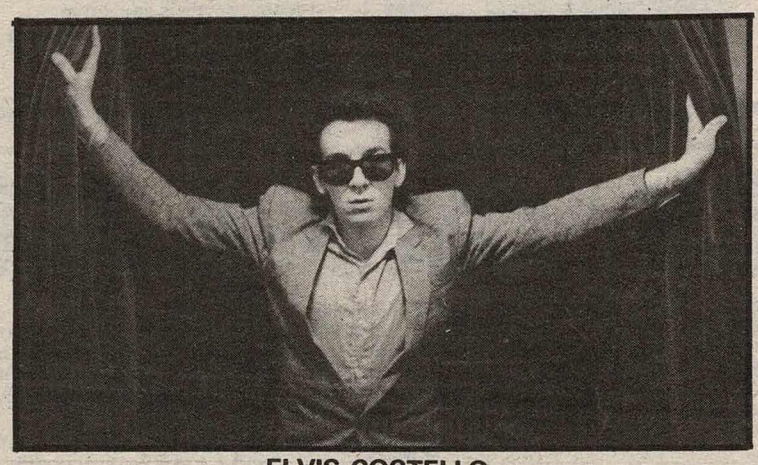


JOE STRUMMER
Riot Wing Party

STEVE HILLAGE
Minister Of Agriculture

BOB GELDOF
Hot Eire Party

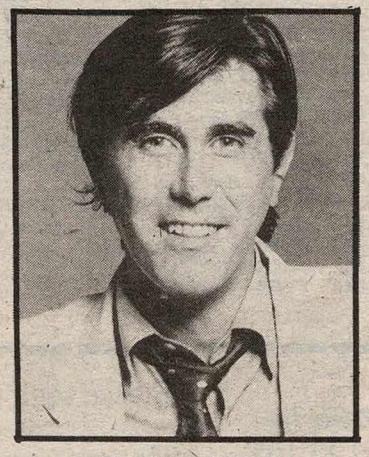
SIOUXSIE SIOUX
Government Whip



ELVIS COSTELLO
British Ambassador To USA

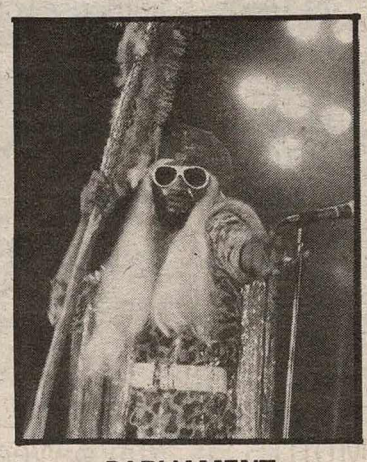
LINTON KWESI JOHNSON
It Dread Inna Inglan Party

MICK JAGGER
All Night Party



BRYAN FERRY
It's My Party

MALCOLM McLAREN
Seditionary Party



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THROUGH A GLASS BLACK AND WHITELY

ADRIAN THRILLS meets THE MONOCHROME SET

HAD THE Shadows been fronted by Lou Reed instead of Cliff Richard, the noise they made might have sounded something like The Monochrome Set, one of the latest young London pop groups to have their single released on the Rough Trade label.

The Monochrome Set switched on for the first time almost exactly one year ago, playing their first gig at Hampstead College.

Prior to that, the four members had been biding their time in assorted Vortex-era loser bands with varying degrees of success. Guitarist Lester Square was originally in Adam And The Ants, drummer John Haney in the whacky-go-lucky Art Attacks and bassist Jeremy Harrington in both Gloria Mundi and Mean Street. Singer 'Bid' (it's short for a virtually unpronounceable Indian name) is airily enigmatic as to his musical background, saying only that he was a 'vagrant' before he tuned himself into what is now The Monochrome Set.

There is also a newly-initiated fifth member, video technician Tony Potts, but more about him later on.

First things first. Like The Pop Group's, their name is an ironic one, as Lester Square explained one gloriously sunny afternoon that I interviewed the group in his 'arty' Crouch Hill gaff.

"When we started, someone asked us how we would describe our music, and the word monochrome just came off the top of my head, because we were writing very monochromatic music at that time.

"As we have developed as a band with four different personalities, it has become very colourful, though certain monochrome aspects are still there.

"That's something that we feel is worth developing — the fact that the four of us have completely different interests and influences. We all write songs, so there are all these different facets.

"It creates more tension."

After seeing them late last year at Ronnie Scott's jazz club, Rough Trade's Geoff Travis came to an immediate conclusion — The Monochrome Set were worth recording. A single 'He's Frank'/'Alphaville' soon followed, produced by Travis and Red Crayola's Mayo Thompson.

"Mayo Thompson was great at enhancing certain aspects of the song," enthuses Bid, who wrote it, "but we found that our recent Peel session was slightly more helpful — in five songs you are able to give a much better overall impression of the group."

Having heard the session, already broadcast but certain to be repeated, I can only agree: the stuff ranges from the gritty, economic raunch of 'Espresso' and the syrupy sweet parody-pop of 'Loves Goes Down The Drain' to greyer, more esoteric ramblings like 'Noise'. It's not a game of monotony.

"It's a mixture of pure pop and pure avant garde," says Bid half-seriously, "but without compromising blandness.

"At the moment, our music is very simple, very straightforward. I'd like to try and get away from that a bit. We've already broken away from some of the traditional rock and roll values. Now I'd like to move on."

The Set are irked — and then some — at continual comparisons with Velvet Underground. But, while I wouldn't Reed too much into it, there are undeniable similarites, particularly in Bid's bassy, deadpan vocals.

"We're not trying to cop the Velvets," asserts Bid. "That's been done loads of times before. There are a lot of bands that we are influenced by, but we're not trying to copy them.

"If I get compared with, say, Kevin Ayers then that's fine . . . but as soon as the words Lou Reed are mentioned, we get branded as Velvets imitators. There's as much of anyone else in there."

In common with the worthy Human League and the loathsome Devo, The Monochrome Set have recently started incorporating film visuals into their live shows — which is where fifth member Tony Potts comes in.

"We'd been planning to use film for quite a long time, to expand the whole idea of *The Gig*", says Lester.

"It's only now that we're getting to the position where we can do it. One of the reasons we are using a film maker is that it seems to be a very neglected area. Along with rock and roll, it is one of the few immediate art forms."

Tony: "As far as the films go, we want to be in a situation where we can show full-length films as part of the evening's entertainment.

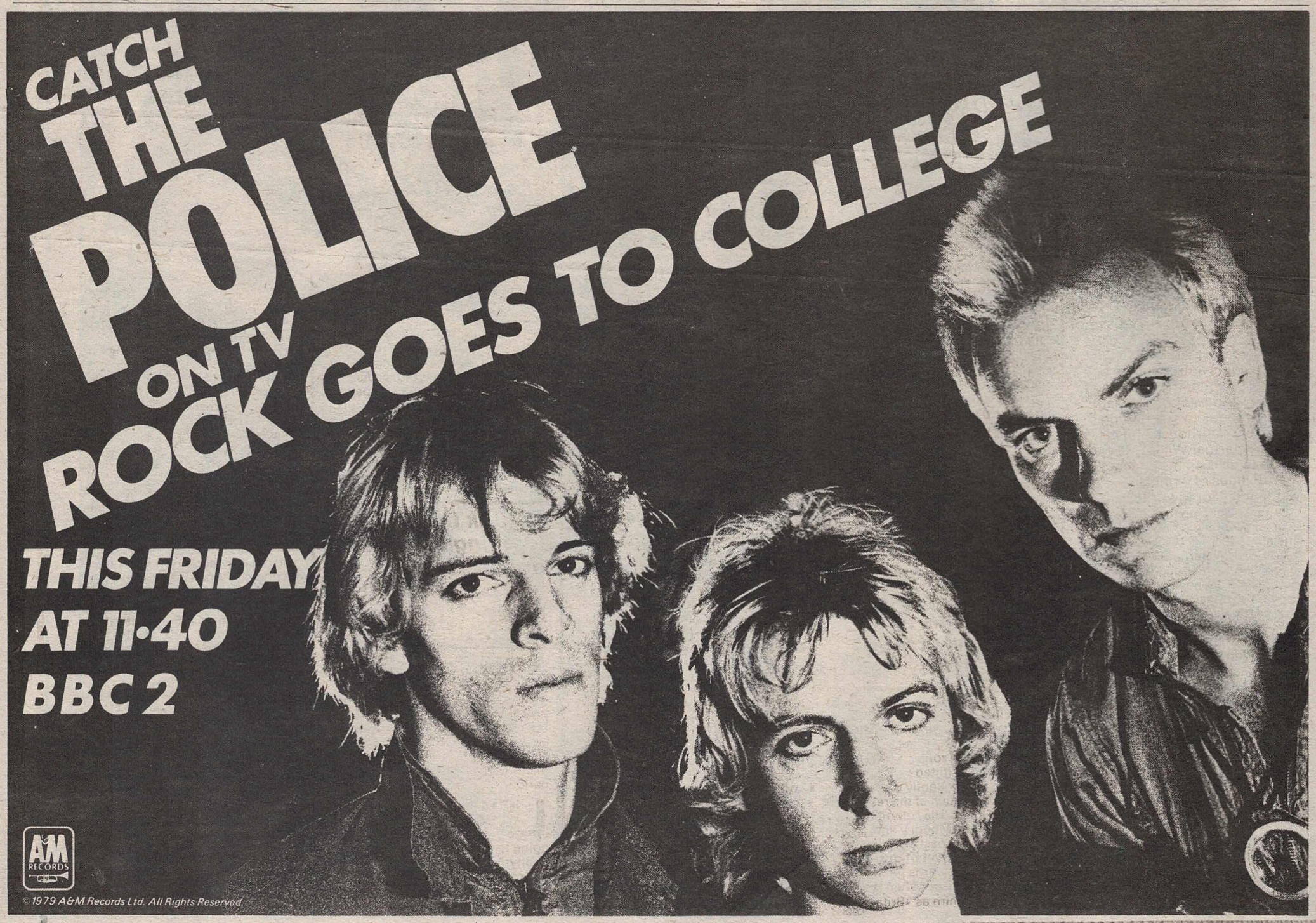
"I'm interested in manipulating people's expectations of a rock gig, and a film can help to contribute to the overall atmosphere of the set.

"There should be an overall mood visually, not just a series of effects flashing on and off in time with the music, which is usually what lighting rigs are just used for.

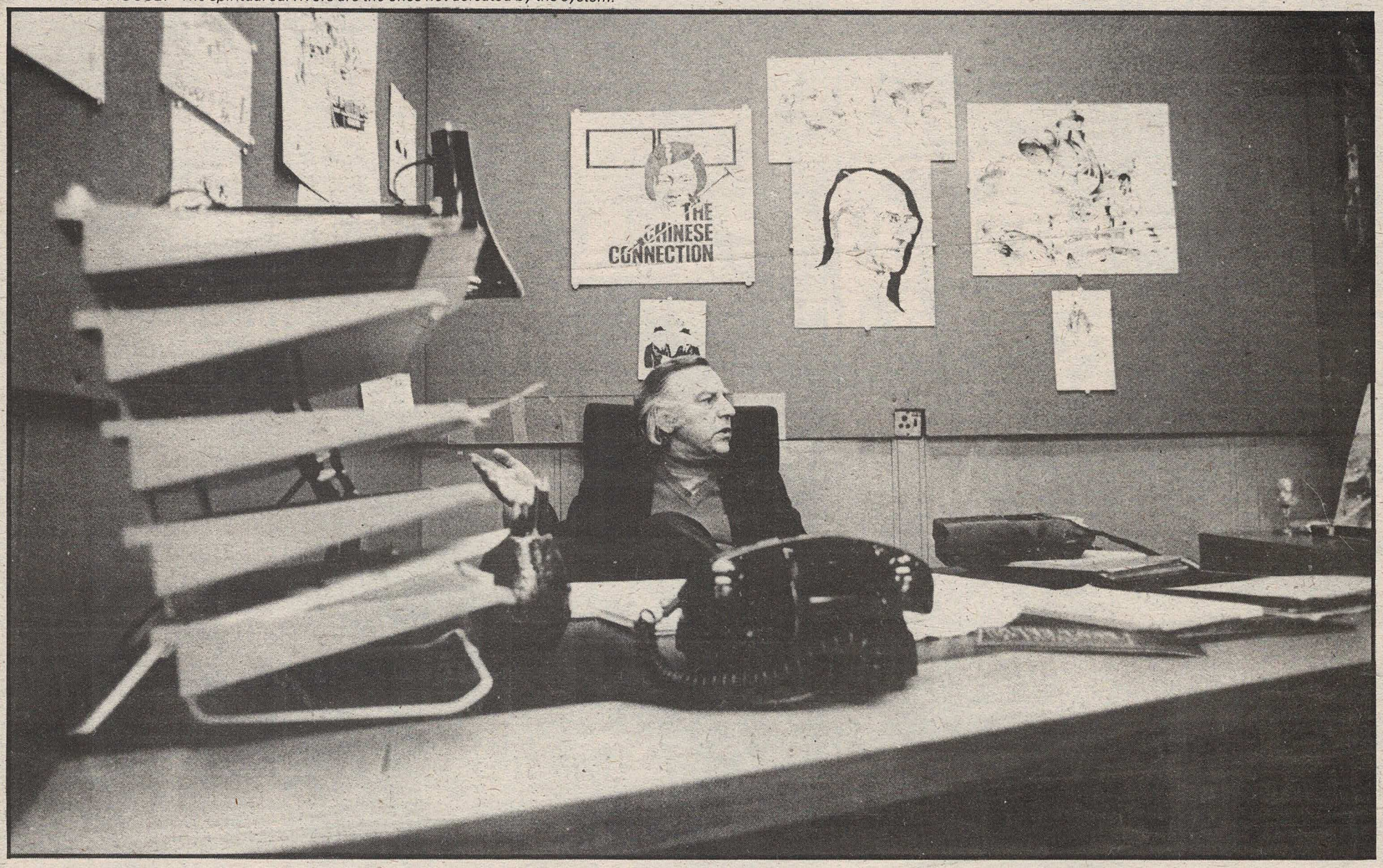
Jeremy: "We want to try and expand on the basic idea of just being a band playing a gig. But we don't want to become inaccessible. It's so easy to write lyrics and melodies that no-one can understand.

"People say that they can't dance to our music, but I think you can. I can dance to The Monochrome Set."

You too.



KEITH WATERHOUSE: "The spiritual survivors are the ones not defeated by the system."



The Angry Young Man Who Didn't Sell Out

KEITH WATERHOUSE, *Daily Mirror* Columnist Of The Year, was one of the original Angry Young Men of the '50s. Now in *his* 50s, he is still a caustic, committed observer of our times. Sid Vicious is as likely to feature in his column as the deadly duo of Callaghan and Thatcher. Looking for a name-check, STEVE CLARKE (words) and PENNIE SMITH (pictures) cornered him in Fleet Street.

KEITH WATERHOUSE once brushed shoulders with rock and roll. Actually it was more a crossing of swords.

The year was 1966 or thereabouts and the place Los Angeles. Under the patronage of one Andrew Loog Oldham, then svengali to The Rolling Stones, Waterhouse and his writing partner Willis Hall were in LA to discuss the possibilities of writing a screenplay for the Stones.

After soaking up the Californian sun for several days and sampling the other delights of the Beverly Hills Hotel, Waterhouse was beginning to think Jagger and company were never going to arrive. But finally they did, attired in Nazi regalia and intent on making things as difficult as possible for the two scribes.

"We didn't talk the same bloody language as far as they were concerned," says Waterhouse, drinking his white wine and soda at a fairly prodigious rate in a pub just seconds away from *The Daily Mirror's* London offices.

Apart from the Stones' truculence, the other thing that remains in Waterhouse's mind about the incident is Keith Richards' — or was it Brian Jones's — obsession with how to smuggle a Luger pistol into Britain. Waterhouse laughs vigorously as he recalls that the Rolling Stone was considering disguising the gun by hiding it in a box of grass seed. As for the film script, that was the last Waterhouse heard of it.

These days his contact with the pop world is confined to when his children give him a list of albums they'd like for Christmas presents. Realising their father's inability to tell The Boomtown Rats from Captain Beefheart, they've taken to including a fictitious record in their lists so that, when Waterhouse goes to buy the records he makes a perfect fool of himself. "You know, they'll write something like 'Live From Birmingham — The Vomit'," he cackles. "I've been caught two years running."

'The Daily Mirror, like all other papers, got punk completely wrong. The trouble is, it's always written by pop music writers.'

Keith Waterhouse's *Daily Mirror* columns are one of Fleet Street's few enlightened zones, a haven from the shortsighted and emotive claptrap that frequently passes for journalism in much of the rest of the British Press: His columns have appeared every Monday and Thursday for the past eight years. During that time Waterhouse has won numerous awards for his pungent journalism. When the *Mirror* refers to him as "Britain's Number One Columnist", there's few who'd argue.

Waterhouse is an unblinkered socialist, the enemy of red tape and crazed town planners. A candid man, he offers no excuses when he agrees that his heart lies somewhere in the Britain of the '50s when monsters like nuclear power and Spaghetti Junction were still in the planning stage. He detests bigotry, regardless of whether it comes from left or right; Waterhouse is an original Anti-Nazi League sponsor and has marched on both the ANL London demonstrations. He has attacked the hysterical reaction to the League in various corners of the media, and also castigated the aggressive mindlessness of some of the League's literature.

Waterhouse also loathes pretension. Years ago he left an early draft of his most successful novel *Billy Liar* — the book is now in something like its 15th paperback edition — in the back of a taxi, a very *Billy Liar* thing to do. He was later glad he lost the manuscript. "It was pretentious drivel," he says, sounding angry at himself in his gutteral Yorkshire accent.

As Waterhouse suggests, his columns range from the trivial to the intense. Even when he writes about himself he does so with a sense of finely judged satire and something approaching diffidence, an unusual quality for so egocentric an animal as a journalist. He also has what seems to be an innate understanding of the way us Britons live. His latest novel *Office Life* is a satire on the current British malaise that centres on the foibles of office life with unerring accuracy, despite Waterhouse's style falling a little foul of the dullness of the topic. Like Randy Newman's songs, Waterhouse's writing ridicules, with varying degrees of sympathy, the idiosyncracies of ordinary folk.

Born 50 years ago of working class parents in Leeds, some of the inspiration for Waterhouse's novels comes from the time he spent working in dreary office jobs like rent collecting — the protagonist of his third novel *Jubb* is a rent collector — and wasting away as an undertaker's clek; Billy Fisher aka *Billy Liar* also had the misfortune to work in a funeral parlour.

'Punk talks about working class but it doesn't mean working class. It means Us, doesn't it? They just haven't got the proper word.'

LIKE ALL working class heroes Waterhouse was determined to better himself: "I wasn't going to work in a bloody factory or anything foolish of that kind." In any case he never considered himself working class: "Working class people don't become writers." Not that he considered or considers himself middle class: "I don't much care for the middle class. I think it's the most selfish of all our classes."

Working first as a reporter for a Yorkshire paper, Waterhouse reached Fleet Street at what is now thought of as an obscenely early age for a journalist to work for a national newspaper: "When I joined the *Mirror* I was 21. You don't see very many young men in Fleet Street anymore. Molloy (Mike Molloy, the *Mirror's* editor) joined as an office boy when he was 15. They wouldn't let you through the door at that age now."

Waterhouse sees Fleet Street as an ageing street: "It's a dinosaur, and not only because it's using old technology when it should be using new technology. The idea of putting papers on trains and sending them to Abedeen is rather ludicrous."

He joined the *Mirror* as a feature writer, doing time as a leader writer (the paper's opinion column), a political writer and even a stint on the foreign desk. A strike sometime in the second half of the '50s prompted Waterhouse to quit the *Mirror* and start writing novels.

His first book, *There Is A Happy Land*, based on his experiences as a child brought up on a council estate amidst the depression of the '30s — "It was like living in a plateful of cold porridge. It was an awful place," he recalls — was published in 1957. *Billy Liar* came two years later. With stage

■ *Continues over*

WATERHOUSE

■ *From previous page*

versions, including a musical, following in the wake of the book, Billy soon became a national anti-hero.

Waterhouse has still to cap the success of *Billy Liar*, though on merit alone its successor *Billy Liar On The Moon* was every bit as good as the original. As yet Waterhouse has no plans to write another *Billy Liar* book, but he did tell me that the idea of a terminal adolescent like Billy bringing up a child could possibly form the basis of a third novel.

While following his star as a novelist and diversifying into film and TV scripts, not to mention the odd play and musical, Waterhouse kept his *Daily Mirror* connection. In case you weren't counting, his involvement with the paper has now lasted 28 years. At the turn of the '60s *The Daily Mirror* embarked on what was a foolhardy if brave venture, *The Mirror Magazine*, a weekly affair like a colour supplement given away with each Wednesday's newspaper. Waterhouse wrote a weekly column for it. When *The Mirror Magazine* folded his column survived and it was absorbed into the main body of the paper on a twice weekly basis.

"I found I'd been highjacked into becoming a columnist".

A PONDEROUS, shabby man, dressed in the kind of threads much favoured by '50s Bohemians — suede shoes, roll-neck sweater worn under a V-neck pullover — Keith Waterhouse is not the cheerful Yorkshireman I took him for after perusing one of the mug shots that appear regularly in the *Mirror*. Despite the lack of overt humour in his conversation — not unusual for a man who earns his living by writing wry commentaries on the way we live — Waterhouse is perfectly agreeable.

When I wrote to him suggesting that he should be featured in *NME*, he wrote back puzzled at why *NME* should want to interview "a tone-deaf columnist", but agreed all the same. As befits a professional, he has never missed a single deadline in his eight-year stint as twice-a-week Mirror columnist, but at times the going gets tough.

"The longer the time I have the longer I spread it out," he explains, referring to how long it takes him to write a column. "I manufacture it sentence by sentence until I've got it right. I might draft the intro about a dozen times. Some sentences might get done two or three times.

"There's always something to write about. The odd thing about the column is putting your own thumb-print on an event. For example, yesterday I was quite desperate to think of today's column. Now the newspapers are full of news about industrial disputes.

"The position is always, well, I've just done that, or the leading article has just said everything I wanted to say, or perhaps my view on something is so conventional that it's not worth stating. It's not enough just to have the news event. You've got to have something to say in your peculiar way."

As it happened on this occasion, he finished up not writing about a news event at all, choosing to recollect his recent collecting days, hanging his memories on a story about a woman who locked up some council officials in her flat.

He is unimpeachably loyal to the *Mirror*, a paper that has been frequently decried for going down-market in an attempt not to lose out to the soaraway *Sun* with its emphasis on trivia, tits and Toryism.

"The thing about the *Mirror*" he says, "is it know what tabloid journalism is all about. It's serious when there's something to be serious about. It has the leader every day. It has the briefing page on page two. It has *Close Up*. It's got me twice a week.

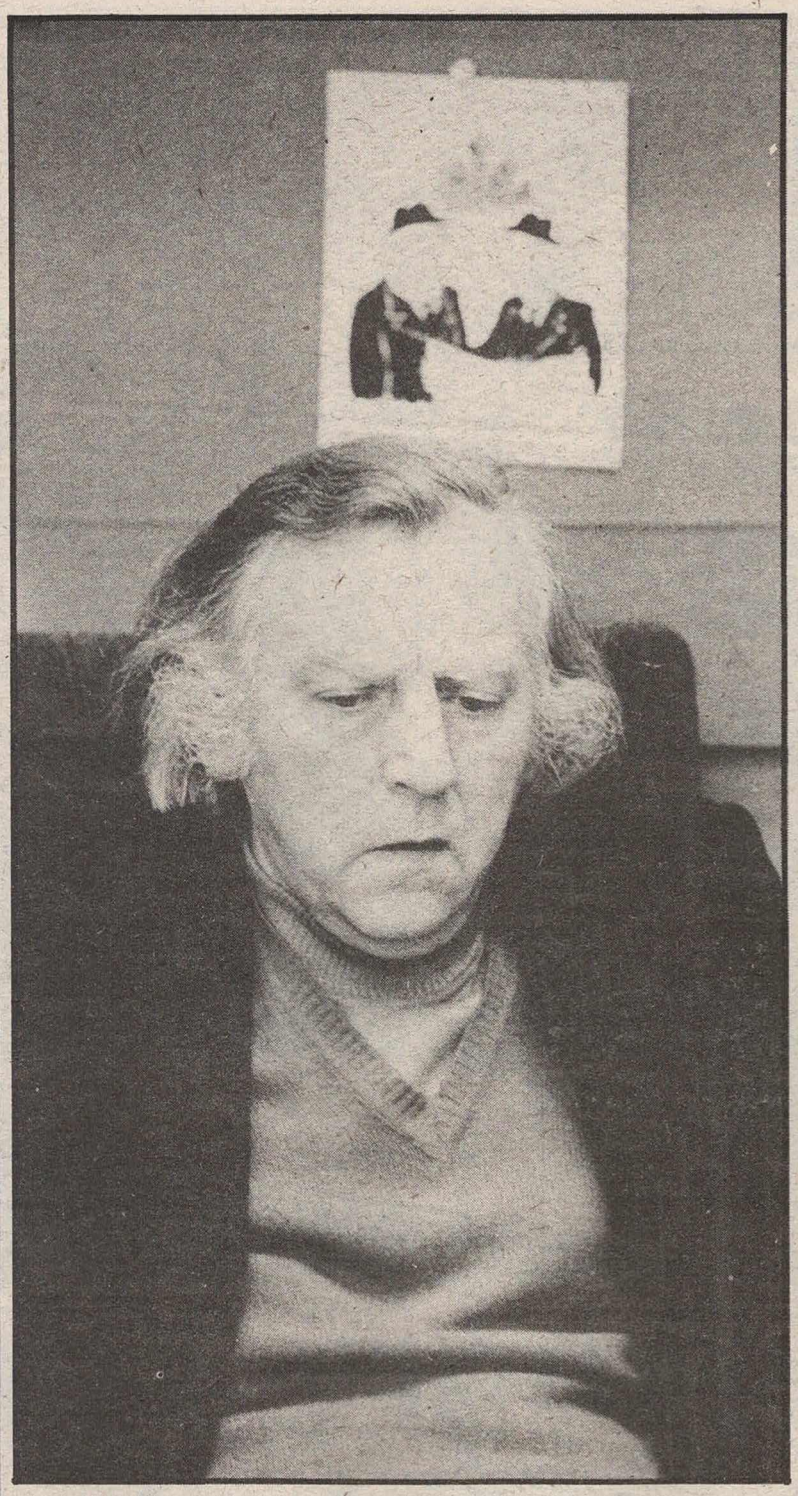
"A paper has got to have a heart and soul as well as the right content. *The Sun* has never uderstood that, *The Sun* has no proper policy. It simply asks 'What are your readers thinking? We'll simply follow that'. It's a load of rubbish. As for *The Star*, that's absolutely pathetic. It's like the scrapings of a dustbin bungled together and put in page form. Total drivel from beginning to end."

Waterhouse has two major criticisms of the Press overall — that they're too obsessed by main line politics and political personalities, rather than actual issues, and that they're far too cringing towards authority.

A recent story in *The Daily Telegraph* on the police use of arms made him see red: "It was a total justification and defence of the police using arms. It was a news story And it was only there to persuade the public that our police were wonderful and that this is the best of possible countries. You do find a lot of that stuff sliding about in the newspapers. They're very status quo, aren't they?"

He agrees that the Press's treatment of punk was atrocious: "*The Daily Mirror*, like all the other papers, got it completely wrong. The trouble is it's always written by pop music writers. As a subject it should have been taken right away from them and given to someone who would look at the social aspects of the whole thing."

But didn't the papers tend to do that?



WATERHOUSE: "I think the country will be healthier, although poorer."

"They regarded it as simply the latest thing in music."

Surely they were more into sensationalising it?

"Oh certainly, but I don't think anyone went into what it was there for. What it was doing there."

What does he think punk was doing?

"It sounds pretentious, but I think it was a kind of political statement. In the same way that graffiti means something — graffiti means pretty well what it says, actually — punk rock was making very basic statements.

"And I don't mean the words of the songs. I simply mean the thing itself. And talking about the state of affairs we're in and about the kind of homes people live in, and the kind of job they either have or don't have."

An aspect of punk that worried me, I suggest, was that it reinforced class barriers. "It seems to, but whether it actually does I don't know. It talks about working class, but it doesn't mean working class. It means Us, doesn't it? They just haven't got the proper word. They choose to call it working class but just because they choose to call it working class doesn't mean it is."

ONE OF Waterhouse's most memorable columns, *Life in the Junk Age*, was in fact sparked off by the Sid Vicious episode at the Chelsea Hotel. "That," he says, "brought together a lot of fragments of thinking about the '70s that I'd often meant to say and the moment had never been right. Those moments choose themselves."

Seething with passion, Waterhouse said more about the consumer-obsessed, streamlined nightmare that is true '70s than any other commentator. Rather than pouring out a stream of self-righteous indignation at Vicious's latest suicide attempt, Waterhouse admitted that there were no easy answers to our problems, a symptom of which was media creation in Sid's downfall.

"The column did end on a hopeless note, I'm afraid," he says. "I do feel quite pessimistic in some ways and in another way I feel quite optimistic, plus I think there are going to be survivors. Do you remember a couple of pieces called *The Polyocracy* which tried to define a newish social class?

"It's really the polytechnic generation which goes right across the spectrum of England and is creating a new class. I think these will be the survivors of the junk age. And I think the country will be healthier, although poorer."

Waterhouse has become heated, his eyes thick with anger — proof that despite his affluence (he earns £20,000 a year from the *Mirror* alone) and enormous success, he's still an angry man.

"The spiritual survivors." he continues, "are the ones not defeated by the system. Where I live in Islington, which is what they call a mixed community — in other words most of the roofs are falling in — there's some pretty hopeless people about.

"The housing's not tower blocks. They're fairly low rise in fact, but they're the usual desolate places. The place is crawling with social workers and traffic wardens and people waiting to die. But in various pockets, basements, you find the polyocracy living. And they have adapted to this place and they live very cheaply. When councils have done their worst and tried to destroy a neighbourhood by taking out all the life, these people put the life back in.

"It's interesting to see it in Manchester where they've got a famous block of flats named after prominent architects which they can't let — like the Piggeries in Liverpool. And they've started letting students and young people, singles or doubles, take them. So for the first time these despised tower blocks are being properly lived in because the right kind of people are living in them rather than families. Families should never have been put in them in the first place."

The *Junk Age* piece concluded by pointing out how bereft the

■ *Continues page 44*

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SPARKS (from left) Ronald and Russell Mael. Pic: MIKE LAYE.

CHARM-O-METER HITS RECORD LOW

Injudicious abuse (swearing even) causes new disco candidates SPARKS to fail personality test. BOB EDMANDS remonstrates.

"WE HAVE a lot more personality than anyone else Giorgio Moroder has worked with before," says Russell Mael of Sparks.

Russell is attempting to explain the significance of the newly-released Sparks album which Moroder produced, but his explanation seems a little inadequate.

Moroder is best known for his work with Donna Summer. Are you really suggesting, Russell, that Sparks have more personality than Ms Summer?

"Yes," says Russell, very firmly, "I think so."

Equally convinced is Russell's brother, Ron.

"Donna Summer, uh, is a, uh, personality," says Ron, "but she doesn't, um, have personality."

Since Ron Mael's personality seems to consist of disguising himself as Charlie Chaplin and stumbling over sentences, you may rightly conclude he's got a lot of nerve.

Ditto for Brother Russell, who's content to pose around as a guileless teenybop idol. Former teenybop idol that is.

"We didn't want to have our picture on the album," Russell preens.

"Oh, why's that?

"Because there's too much personality and it tends to overshadow the music and so we managed a compromise."

And that is?

"Our picture's not on the outside of the album, but on the dust jacket inside."

So be warned. Do not glance at the dust jacket of Spark's new album, or you will immediately realise the music is inferior to their picture. Ah well. . .

Some five years ago, the Brothers Mael were extremely fashionable in the U.K. They had a top 10 single with a song called 'This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us'.

Sceptics may have suspected that this success resulted from their novelty value.

Ron looked like Charlie Chaplin in those days too. In fact, he was probably born with that kind of moustache. Also, he used to sit at the keyboards with a fixed stare and then move his eyes sideways like a reptile.

A reptillian Charlie Chaplin seemed a pretty strong selling point. But Brother Russell had his plusses, too.

He wasn't just a pretty face. He used to gabble Brother Ron's lyrics in a high, keening falsetto.

It was a weird act, weird enough to sell a few records, but not too many.

Still, the rock press liked them. Ron's words were sort of witty, and his arrangements were sort of clever. But even the critics eventually got bored.

"Assholes", says Ron.

"Cunts", says Russell.

"Oh sorry," says Ron, very wittily, "assholes is last year's word. You're right. Cunts."

The Brothers Mael are using terms for parts of the anatomy of which many people are very fond to express their view of the British rock press.

Wishing to appear urbane I take no offence, but why this spontaneous denunciation, chaps?

"Well, uh, I don't, um, care what they write," says Ron, stumbling again after his brief moment of passion. "It upsets me when other people, er, take stock of the, um, rock press.

"I mean, uh, I don't subscribe to all the, um, rock papers. I subscribe to other, er, things."

Such as?

"Well, er . . . (extremely long pause) news, uh, magazines. Things with a, um, broader, er, aspect."

Evidently the Maels consider British opinion to be somewhat volatile.

"Every week it, um, changes as to what's, uh, in fashion and what's, er, out of fashion. Week in and, uh, week out. It's exciting, but also, um, amusing."

Isn't it annoying, too, if you think your music is consistent?

"That's the one thing we've got going for us," says Russell, "Our music is consistent. We will be around longer than Joe Blow who wrote a review of us five years ago."

For the moment, though, the Maels are stuck with the Brits. As Russell admits, they have no more than a cult following in their home country. (They come from, uh, Los Angeles, by the, um, way).

So is this collaboration with Giorgio Moroder an attempt to prop up your credibility?

"That may be your, um, opinion," says Ron, "But that's, er . . ."

"If you want to do something in that line," says Russell, "you go to the best and Giorgio's the best."

"Giorgio got tired of working completely with black girls," says Ron. "He, um, wanted to move into the white boys area.

"So it worked out perfectly because we needed the technological, er, help to put across what we wanted to do and he had that kind of expertise."

SPARKS SAY they first contacted Moroder a year ago (when Moroder was still unfashionable). A German journalist who's "Giorgio's best friend in L.A." brought them together.

"And he turned out to be an incredible person," says Russell, "and we became incredible friends."

Incredible.

"And it's not just a one-off. We're working on another album with him in May."

So far, however, the first collaboration has had mixed reviews, and the single from the album 'Number One Song In Heaven' has had little earthly acclaim.

To help things along, the Maels are sitting in the press office at Virgin Records giving audience to assorted assholes and cunts from the rock press.

Now about this album of yours. True, it's got Giorgio's trademark, synthesisers and a big, flashy beat, but isn't there a danger that you Maels have submerged your identity under it all?

"I guess you could say we, uh, helped to submerge each other," says Ron. "Giorgio has expanded what he, er, has always been. We're different than what we've, um, always been.

"It could have been a very, uh, negative thing. Entirely, um, self-cancelling. But in fact, it's very, er, positive."

Won't people see you as just another act in the Moroder catalogue?

"We should be so, uh, lucky," says Ron.

THE SPARKS say they'll be taking their new sound on the road later in the year. The partnership with Moroder stemmed from their wish to work totally with synthesiser (and, of course, a drummer) so there won't be a guitarist in the line-up.

"In the past" says Russell, 'we'd been cheating because the whole Sparks thing was based around Ron's keyboards, and we'd impose his style on a guitar player. So there'd always be that discrepancy."

"It was always watered down to be just another, er, rock band," adds Ron. "All those '60s trappings and a guitarist leaping about are so, um, old-fashioned."

As a result the new Sparks touring act will feature two other synthesiser players in addition to Ron. But *definitely* no guitarist.

"The guitar", says Russell "just has to be about the most passe thing that's still around."

Present company excepted of course, chaps.

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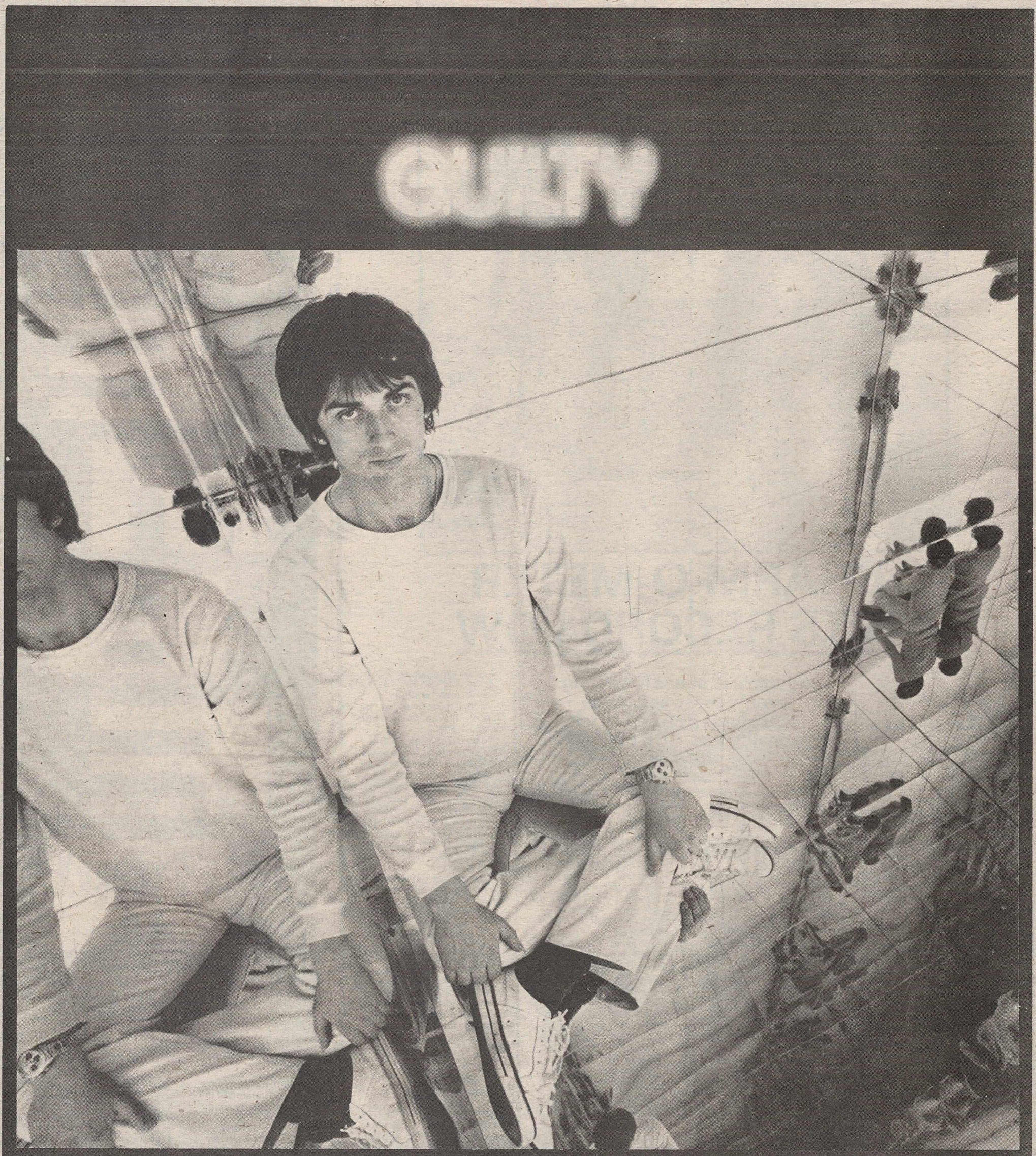

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SINGLES

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THE LEAD REVIEW, BUT LET'S HAVE NO HATS IN THE AIR JUST YET.

BILL SUMMERS & SUMMERS HEAT: Straight To The Bank (Prestige) These days, with the currency conglomerates turning their sweaty gaze firmly on what they believe is a clean-cut non-swearing Youth Club youth, it probably won't be long before they twig what is one of the current disco turns of phrase, viz a viz, 'The Bank'. Then we shall be strafed with hideous bejeaned dance troops "going real crazy daddy" to defenceless dance tunes such as this, whilst sincerely assuring us that all the swingers in the know have discovered that building societies are right up there with Anarchy and 7-Up as an 'in crowd' essential. Well, by thunder, we can still beat William and Glynns to this one. Even though this circle of bounce infection was released when Hyde Park was still in a flower pot it appears we never reviewed it, and it's still fine enough to save you scouring the new releases for something half as good. This twelve inch articulates the obligatory nonsense lyric with a neat derring-do drum push and horn section that sounds like they couldn't care if they don't get home till Tuesday week. A casual opening leads through a flying, loose build-up until we're into the hooks and proper. Though never whipping up magic enough to compete with its half sister, Shalamars' 'In The Bank', when played hard and loud enough it creates a passion all its own. You can and should own it.

MIKE OLDFIELD: Guilty (Virgin). There was giggling when they handed me this, a Mike Oldfield disco single. All that piety and introverted humility shorn away, nowadays Oldfield at least has the decency to look as if he takes his liberties and money with bottle. What was the point in looking like Jed Clampett when you had the ackers to make the recent pools scooper look like Nick Kent? Anyrate, he goes disco without taking the hornpipe from his lips and thus a praiseworthy attempt is castrated. This bash has the semblance of something cutting but he twees all over it and even sits crossed legged on the sleeve. Maybe he thinks people dance to anything these days. Huh!

THE FLOATERS: Float On (Long Version) (ABC). Bejasus this dab of diabetes was strain enough first time around and a long version gets re-released yet! Hi I'm Dan and I was born on the cusp! Disco can turn out exquisite fast-pace gems at a rate of knots, yet you're lucky if one in ten smoochers prevents you from nodding off on your girlfriend's shoulder. The Floaters had this one freak hit and their turgid follow-ups sank like so many dumplings. A damn silly word dumpling is too!

BOBBY CALDWELL: What You Do For Love (TK). Make that one in twenty, and here's the one. A real darling and as close as we may get in our hunt for the Single Of The Week. Without profundity this nevertheless anchors well clear of the saccharine sea; a beautifully constructed and worked song that pays off in warmth what it lacks in tune. Caldwell's voice double tracks without blanding out and the lilting brass carries the weight without fussing. One of the best low light-I lerv you songs since Latimore's 'Straighten It Out'.

GLAXO BABIES— This Is Your Life (Heartbeat). The drummer's crisp and the guitars all fit until it gets spoiled by the type of staring humanoid vocals that many 'new music' bands feel throw some sort of ironic or modern inflection on their lyrics. It's probably a bluff because they're too inhibited to actually sing. A lot of new wave vocalists get away with murder, just standing there acting bored or zombiefied, when they'd shrivel up and die if they were ever called upon to do some work. Lungs the size of thrupenny bits most of 'em! But I diverse. Apart from the vocals and a stale arty press hand out ("The name originates from some experiments they were conducting with baby food names at art school") this is a rather decent record. I'm particularly taken by that stringy guitar sound, and though only the title track of this Bristol outfit's four tracker really grabs, they'll probably sort themselves out for more notable pieces in time. (I apologise for the tone toward the end of that review, this is what comes of inhaling next to a schoolteacher).

ERUPTION: One Way Ticket (Hansa / Atlantic). I think their version of 'I Can't Stand The Rain' was *their* fifteen minutes of stardom as this hopeless bash serves only those hankering for something until Boney M get out a new one. The sleeve shows that once more, our hopes that Chicory Tip chic had vanished have been dashed.

THE TUNES: Truth, Justice And The Mancunian Way (Rhesus). Dominated by the pointed notes of Anne Webley's shrill toned organ, another 12" four track indie that while being worthwhile in a mindless sort of way, is rinsed clean of any fire and passion that could conceivably have lurked in the framework of the songs. The Tunes achieve a clean picked riff, always very clipped and light, and then allow Webley's keyboards to run parallel, skipping around and above, with Colin Thorpe's vocals forever trying to paint a little feeling on what inevitably amounts to a thin grey backdrop. Sure it's not a bad record, and it has a cushy little sound overall, but there's no scope for argument in there, neither is there anything which in those dark days we laughingly called 'change'. The Tunes strike me as what The Fall would sound like if they were contented and sane. Independents stopped being different a long time ago.

LEIF GARRETT: Feel The Need (Scott Brothers). Well the campaign men have done their stuff and Leif is in *Mates* mag with the best of them. I must confess his former disc 'I Was Made For Dancing' was received by these ears on many occasions with an open stirrup, despite his nonexistent frame jiggling about obscenely on *TOTP* and the name which begs puns about Autumn. Flinching when I realised this was the old Emeralds dragon, I have yet to overcome that daft reaction that certain songs are 'sacred' merely because they are inexplicably tagged to a mythical golden age or conjure up some absurd closed club, purist connection. A very good version of the track, a particularly solid backline, and a hit.

PLASTIC BERTRAND— Tout Petit La Planete (Sire). Happily, these days the tedious EEC gimmick is filed alongside Animal track Soled Shoes in the great Has Been warehouse. This portion of duffo is particularly grizzly.

SYLVESTER: I (Who Have Nothing) (Fantasy). Though 'Mighty Real' was definitely one of the top three singles last year, I always felt Sylvie could get rank as easily as get inspired. Dripping drama and desperately trying to be 'heavy' record, the old Bassey/Jones warstick hangs eternally on the pumping bass pedal of an intro yet never delivers a single tingling flurry. 'Mighty Real' was blitzkreig zest, a thundering triumph, but the bathos of 'I' comes as a sinister disappointment. BUT! If you see this twelve inch BUY IT! Because not only does the B side contain the full 'Mighty Real' disco mix but also a dynamite electronic moody instrumental that, penned by Sylvester alone, quashes all those "talentless, hysterical transvestite" rumours.

THE GANGSTERS: Record Company (Stortbeat). I'm a sucker for records like this. Ancient but manic rock'n'roll, untempered raw and pointless, all Brown Sugar and 'Naive' by The Killjoys. The panting, ranting singer keeps losing touch with the mike, rejecting CBS and EMI, still braying of the "betrayal" of 1977, and how the music press is run entirely by business men. I'm not being patronising, I genuinely think this record is good. (Reasons for this can be found in I. Penman's *The Empirical Romanticist At Large — Threat To Our Pop Kids. Vols 1-55* and soon to be a major new revue in the West End!)

THE SCARS: Horrorshow (Fast). Boomy drum and menacing bass sound are the only redeemers in this caterwauling chunk of the new new super heavy godfather wave metal. Stupefying in its attempts to be alienating and harsh, it winds up just another single for the sake of it. A very conventional '45 for the, excuse my chuckles, Alternative Market.

WAVIS O'SHAVE: Dennis Smokes Tabs EP (Company). Well the big guns are certainly out this week! do you know I've got singles by Public Image, Costello, Blondie and Mickie Dolenz still in the pile but it doesn't look like they'll fit just yet! Now here's my point; if you're gonna take the time and effort to slap out your own record, why act like Joe Blow and hope that by wrinkling your brow and doing your best you'll get results? Not Wavis O'Shave! The outfit might only have an acoustic guitar and a bass but you know what they're about. The chaps improvise all other instruments orally, including a rather unconvincing drumkit, and with titles like 'Mauve Shores Are Awful', 'You Think You're A Lady Because You Don't Eat Fishcakes' and the title track, they thankfully manage to steer clear of being merely 'whacky' — and Lord that's a damning adjective — and dish up as entertaining a handful as you can find this side of Smumpox, Montana. Apart from their tendency to wear an idea thin, there's nothing can stop Wavis O'Shave now . . . barring another rise in the postal charges. (Company Records, Fort Barnes, rookery Lane, Lincoln LN6 7HQ).

HERBIE HANCOCK: Tell Everybody (CBS). A Mark, a Yen, a Buck or a Pound, that clinking clanking sound. 'Bet You Love' could be a ferociously good record at times but this sounds like the formers' middle eight all over again. Cranky cold funk that when you are as talented as Hancock supposedly is, must be routine and cynical to produce.

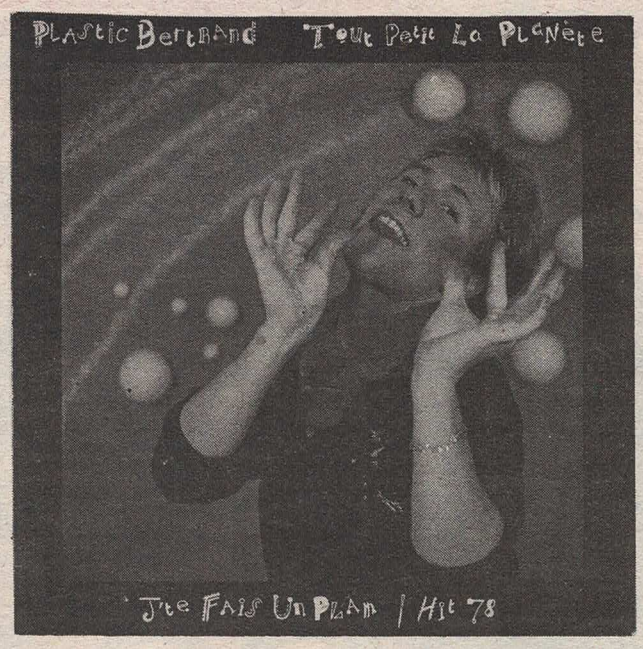
BOB SEGER: Till It Shines (Capitol). Seger always comes across like a good old nut and this acoustic driven opus is a quillion times more acceptable than current blather from the likes of Fleetwood Mac, Smokie, Bob Dylan, etc. A polished, if derivative, piece that will be a radio h(e)aven should the nation decide to give it foive. (I freely admit to the sum one quillion being absolute poppycock).

THIRD WORLD: One Cold Vibe (Island). Firmly established now in dub and pub alike, Third World certainly possess a finer knowledge than other

■ *Continues over*

DANNY BAKER quite likes some of them

SINGLES Contd.



■ *From previous page*
crossover band / records of how to keep a grip on the disco elements — singable, oft repeated chorus and snappy melody phrasing — whilst retaining a backdrop of reggae that at no point becomes token. Still pulling from the 'Journey to Addis' album, this one strikes home healthily enough, never sounding like the third to be selected, which, face it, are usually the dodgy ones.

BILL NELSON'S RED NOISE: Revolt Into Style (Harvest). Press baron Bill Nelson leaves me knitting with his own brand of treated heavy rock. It appears tasteless, colourless and odourless, yet thousands swallow it bag and baggage, and surely they can't *all* be apprentice bell-hops sold on the image?

RATS & DELICIOUS: No time (Logo). One wears a bodice and suspenders, the other don't. That's the colour sleeve so I take it that's how the women want to be sold. The music is by one Phil Dee who appears solely influenced by Rezillos out-takes. A crushingly bad record.

THE SHAPES: EP (Sofa Records). Some kids from Leamington Spa who are enjoying themselves, and here again sits the wretched reviewer forced to pass judgment on a small group's money, time and work. Well The Shapes play unadventurous 1977 one riff pop and here are four tracks all very similar, all very familiar, and probably only of use to local folk who have discovered it all so late. Like the man said, 'Where's The Fire?'.

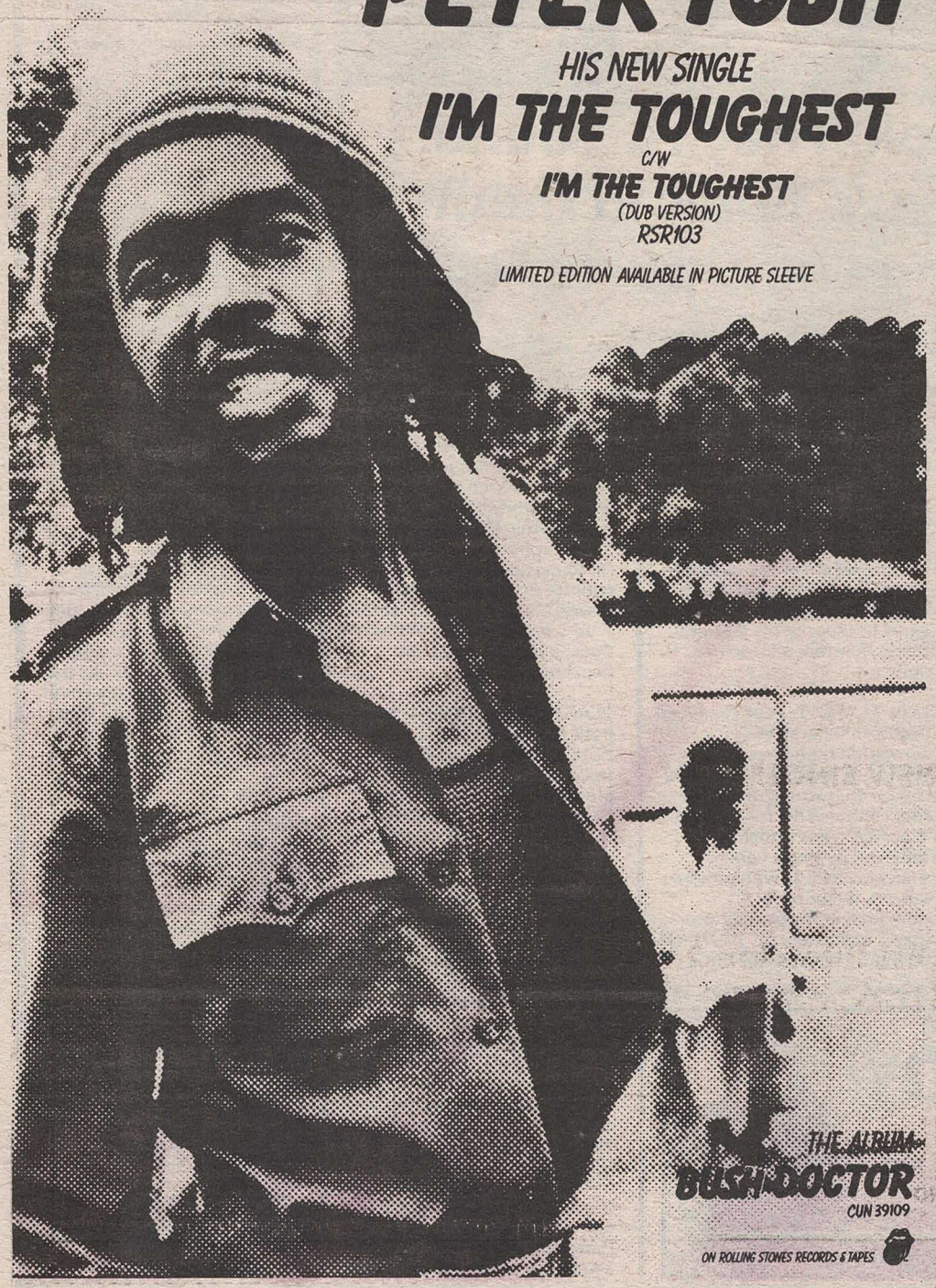
CARBARETTA: Scat (Ignition). Written, produced, recorded and performed by the artist who is not a band but a girl. The actual A side is 'You Must Be Kidding' but that's a bit light, fey and flat so we concentrate on the unaccompanied electronic keyboard work that makes up 'Scat' on the reverse. I doubt if you should spend a pound note for it though, but don't let the name get lost.

CROWN HEIGHTS AFFAIR: Dance Lady Dance (Mercury).
BOHANNON: Cut Loose (Mercury).
CERRONE: Look For Love (CBS).

IMPERIALS: Goin' Outa My Head (Tammi). Four hopeless stabs at the charts. Crown Heights Affair still pack all the punch of a brown ale left overnight with the cap off and will insist in slicing our ears with their clueless trumpet arrangements. Bohannon is caught on his tape loop recording over and over the only thing he know, hoping if he flogs that boring rhythm long enough people will start talking of a 'Bohannon sound'. Cerrone goes back in time too, making a limp fart of a dance tune that is a homage to all the naff Love Unlimited Orchestra fillers rolled into one. Meanwhile, The Imperials get themselves in a lather with a stupid flippant flyweight arrangement of one of the world's most boring songs.

MICKEY DOLENZ: Love Light (Chrysalis). Former monkey — aren't we all? — Dolenz beams back in a white suit and one of those insubstantial hanky / tie affairs that suavos love to drape around their neck. The record is acoustic lalala reminiscent of The Bellamy Bros 'Let Your Love Grow'. Mickey's back! Fans swoon! (Brian & Sally James). Makes lousy record and keeps a firm eye on those repeat fees. The flip of this ton of feathers slog is called 'Alicia'. This ties up things nicely. Alicia = Bridges = *Upstairs Downstairs* Cook = Bellamy Household, whom. I spose, had the brothers who recorded (cont. page 94).

GINO SOCCIO: Dancer (Warner Bros). You may not know this but Gino is a very hot disco property right now. He deals with electronics like Moroder and can boast some deal of success with his 'Outline' album from which this is lifted. Beginning with handclaps I'm always sure will lead into 'Carwash', it builds nicely over a fierce yet tightly tempered series of similar disco patterns. Breathy girl vocals add on and if played loud enough it does cause the old heart some overtime. Gino Soccio is going to get a grip on things pretty soon, you watch. One of my mates said he's gonna be the first '80s guvnor — but then when again I lent him a copy of *The Critique of Metaphysical Reality* he told me it reminded him of "Airport". You see what we're dealing with? . . . .



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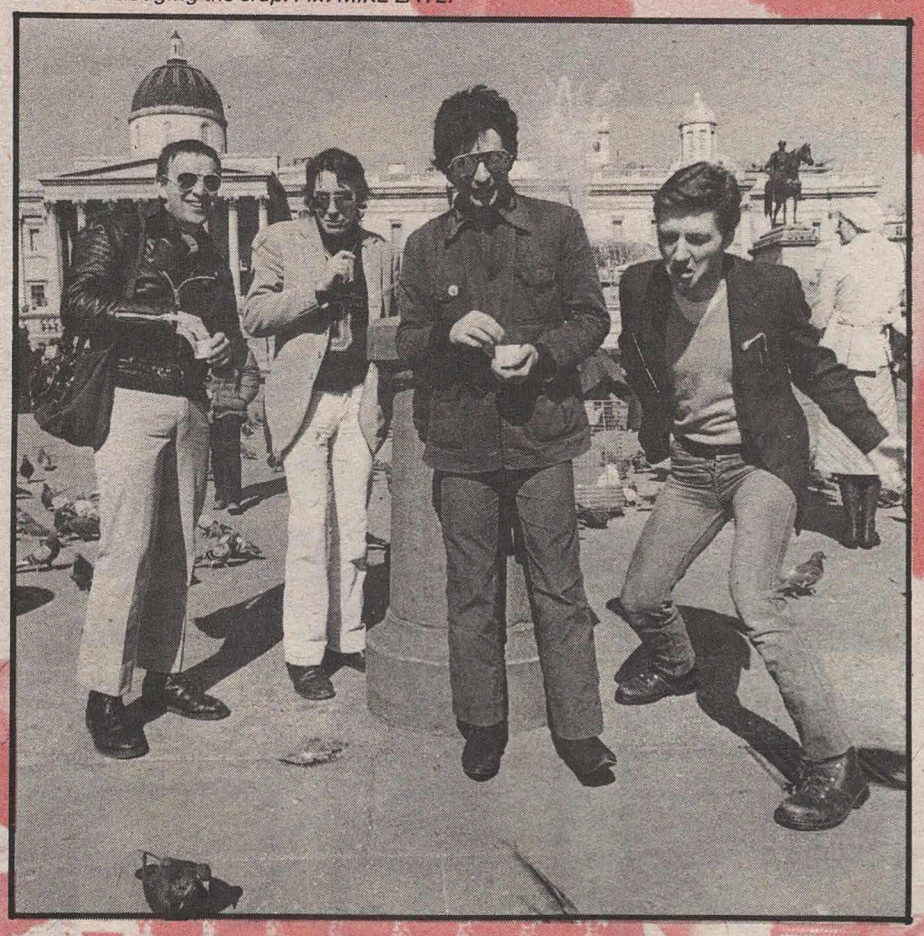
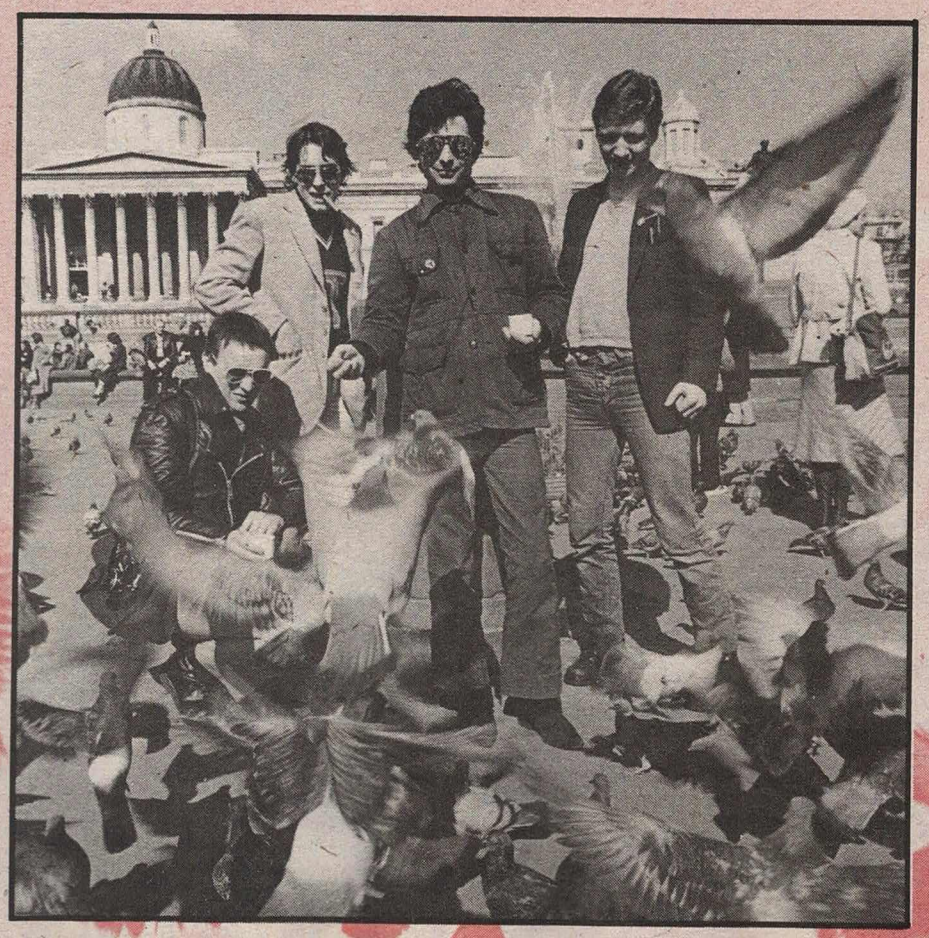
SQUEEZE dodging the crap. Pix: MIKE LAYE.





Putting The Squeeze on TOTP

It means ditching vulgar words like 'bleeding', just for starters. 'Blimming' is what nice people say. SQUEEZE explain to BOB EDMANDS.

ASK CHRIS DIFFORD, one of the singers with Squeeze, who it was that wrote the lyrics to the band's new hit single 'Cool For Cats', and he'll give an embarrassed laugh and say: "Me."

Ask Chris if he's the singer on the record, and Mr. Difford is equally diffident. "'Fraid so", is what he'll say.

Why keep apologising, Chris? Is there something about the record that makes you feel apologetic?

"No", says Chris, "I'm not apologising. Sorry."

'Cool For Cats' is Squeeze's biggest success so far. They had a hit single last year with 'Take Me I'm Yours', but the new one's already outsold it.

Essentially, 'Cool For Cats' is a jokey, lightweight little song, and maybe that's why Chris seems a bit bashful. The words are about matters sexual, in keeping with what the *NME Book Of Modern Music* called the band's "obsession with the seamy side of sex."

The mystery is how they got away with it on the radio.

"I think we did well to get away with it, to be honest," says Chris.

There's a line in the song about giving the dog a bone, and it has only one possible meaning in the context.

"I don't think they realised what it meant on *Top Of The Pops*," Chris comments. "They realised that 'bleeding' was a swear-word, and so we had to change that."

What to?

"Blimming. But they grabbed us two minutes before we went on and told us, and so there wasn't much we could do."

Squeeze's other lead singer, Glenn Tilbrook, says he thinks the compromise was worth it.

"Besides", he explains, "if people go out and buy the record, they get the real thing anyway."

"Yeah", adds Mr. Difford, "The *real* swear-word."

At this thought, the members of the band laugh cheerfully, as well they might. In this year of 1979, a censorship row over the word "bleeding" is inevitably comic.

Squeeze are gathered back-stage waiting to go on at the Nashville pub in West London. They're playing a run of three nights there, and this is the second.

So many punters have turned up that it's practically impossible to move out front. What surprises the band is the number of good old-fashoined punks in the audience.

"I wouldn't have thought we'd have appealed to them," says Tilbrook. And during the Squeeze set you can hear why.

Difford thinks Squeeze got onto the A and M label when they did because the record company were looking for a token new wave act. But as Tilbrook points out, they rode the new wave but weren't really part of it.

"A lot of people find it difficult to categorise us," he says, "and that puts them off."

ON STAGE, Squeeze deliver a very tight performance thanks to the impeccable rhythm section of Mr. Gilson Lavis (drums and Bernard Braden lookalike) and Mr. Johnny Bentley (bass and recent arrival).

Oddly enough, the act sounds as though it would do better in a concert hall than in a club. This is because the songs of Messrs. Tilbrook and Difford are quirky and fairly complicated, and so is the instrumental style of their keyboard player Mr. Julian Holland.

Julian is got up like a New Orleans Pimp, with a big bow tie and a fat cigar, and it's no surprise to hear he was offered a job playing piano in a New Orleans jazz club during Squeeze's debut American tour.

The band had gone to the club to see pianist James Booker, and Squeeze manager Miles Copeland engineered an opportunity to show off his proteges. Julian did his boogie-woogie bit and was promptly offered a regular spot.

"I had to turn it down, though. Told them I was a bit busy."

It seems that Mr. Holland is quite good at turning down showbiz opportunities. He tells a story about how Squeeze refused a request from Elton John to join them onstage.

"I'd got a solo EP out which he'd heard," says Holland, "and he got my number from the record company and phoned me up. I was quite impressed to hear his voice on the phone, actually.

"Anyway, he wanted to join us onstage at a pub called 'The Bricklayers Arms', but we said 'no'.

"It would have lowered the tone. Didn't want a lot of riff-raff in there."

Wasn't it a bit embarrassing saying no like that?

"Yes," says Mr. Holland, "but he came to see us one lunchtime there, anyway, and it was alright."

THE STRANGE thing about Squeeze is why, with two hit singles to their credit, they're still playing pubs and clubs.

Glenn Tilbrook says it's not a lack of self-confidence on their part. They simply take bookings that will help them reach the biggest number of people.

The Nashville is clearly too small, nonetheless, for a band with their pulling power, although Tilbrook admits they wouldn't have attracted so many people but for the single.

The title of 'Cool For Cats' is taken, by the way, from an early television rock'n'roll show. Not that Chris Difford is old enough to remember it.

"The engineer we used on the album remembered it," Chris says, "We were reminiscing one night behind the mixing desk and he brought it up. It seemed like a good title."

If you don't remember that particular TV rock show, which ones do you remember, Chris?

"The hit and miss one *Juke Box Jury*. And I remember Simon Dee because he had a white Jag and I've always wanted one."

A new hit single brings Mr. Difford and his chums closer to white Jags all round, and it's come at a time when many rock reviewers were tending to write them off as a spent force.

Tilbrook says quite freely that the first Squeeze album was a disappointment, even at the time it was issued.

The producer was John Cale, who they'd worked with successfully on their 'Packet Of Three' EP on the Deptford Fun City label.

"Patchy" is Tilbrook's description of the album, but he enthuses (predictably enough) over the second one which they produced themselves.

This month, Squeeze get the chance to sell a few more LPs when they start a three-month "world tour" supporting The Tubes, another act who coincidentally have difficulty translating stage success into hit albums.

"I think our new album is one of the best I've heard," says Glenn. "It's intelligent, both musically and lyrically, and the playing is great."

But why don't you sell a lot of albums to match the singles?

"Well, I think there are few bands to equal us. It's just that the general public don't happen to realise it at the moment."

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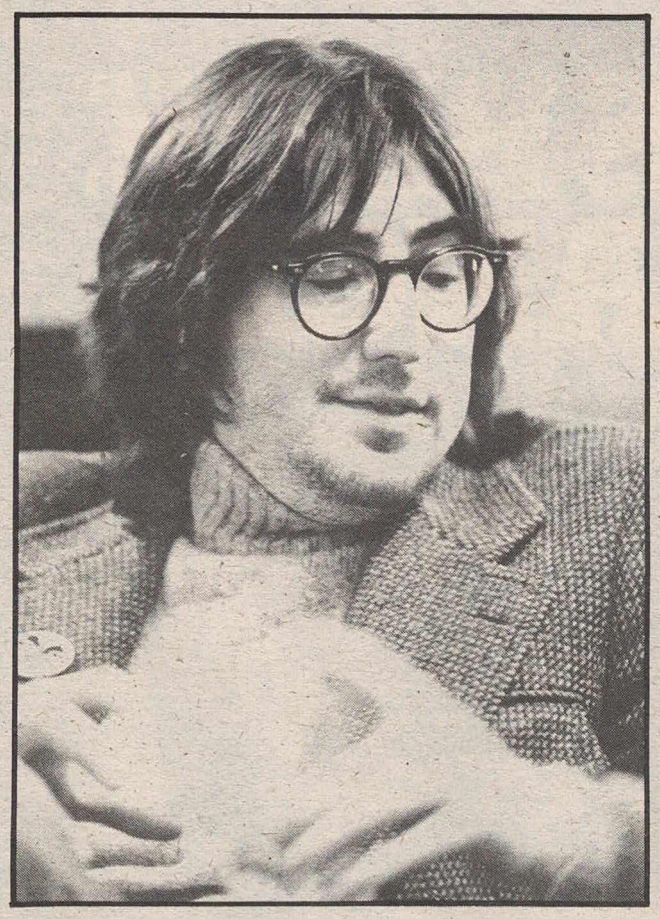

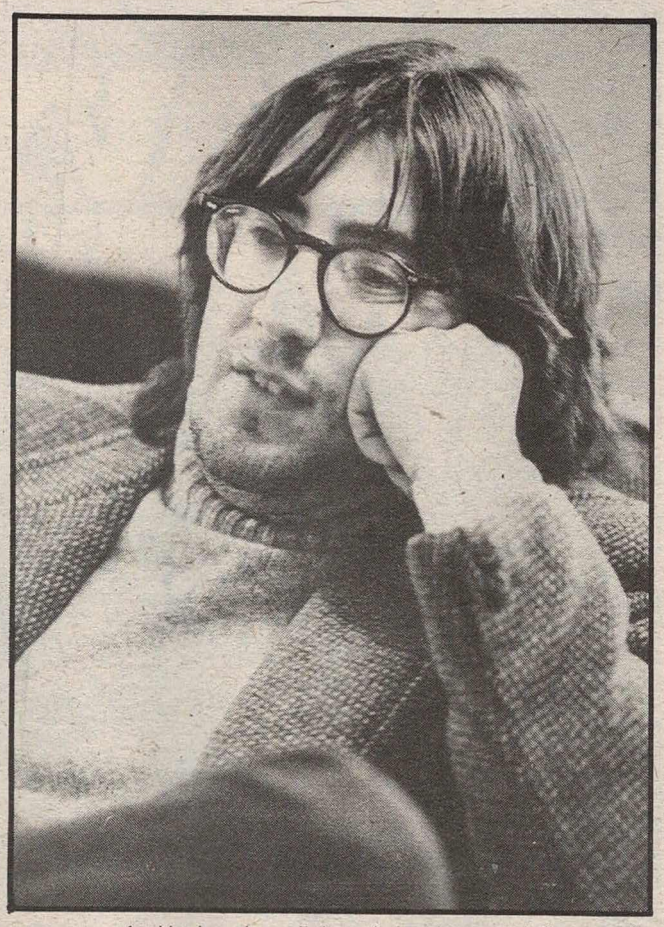

John Landis: "Gee — he thinks I can't see him reaching for his Marlboro's . . .

My God! He sucks them!

*. . . And he has the gall the ask **me** about **my** influences."*

SILVER SCREEN

meets the man who makes money-making comedies

John Landis' Animated Farces

Folio: MONTY SMITH Faces: TOM SHEEHAN

Not an auspicious start. He'd asked the waiter for a Dr Pepper, and got a blank look. "No wonder you're going Communist over here," he muses, aloud. I'd asked *him* if it was OK if I smoked. "Actually, since you asked me, I *do* mind," he says. "If you'd just lit up, I would've been polite. But you asked me and I *hate* it when people smoke — it stays in the curtains and everything. Is that all right? Will you still be favourable? Oh God, I can see it now — 'This righteous asshole I was sitting with . . .' "

This righteous asshole I'm sitting with happens to be Hollywood's latest — and youngest — whizz kid. Just turned 28, John Landis has made the eighth biggest grossing film of all time.

It's called *National Lampoon's Animal House* (reviewed in *Silver Screen* 3/3/79) and it's his third movie. It's taken more money than any other comedy film ever. His voice goes through about 18 octaves as he explains why this fact terrifies him.

"You look at Bogdanovitch or Friedkin, Nichols or Scorsese, a whole slew of directors who have an *enormous* success — then the next picture's *Catch 22* or *New York New York*. So it's like I'm looking over my shoulder," he says, his stubbled chin and owlish glasses giving him the air of an intelligent Jonathan King.

"The first movie *(Schlock)* I made when I was 21, the second *(Kentucky Fried Movie)* when I was 26. So it's not exactly an overnight success. I did a lot of shitty jobs in between."

Landis' immediate future seems secure enough. He's just finished acting, with *Animal House* star John Belushi, in Spielberg's *1941* ("Steve Spielberg is a young guy who I think really has quite a future," he says, mockingly, of his friend — adding, "I didn't like being directed at *all*") and in June he returns to his hometown, Chicago, to film *The Blues Brothers*, again with Belushi.

It will be a narrative musical comedy — "*The* R&B movie of all time," says Landis, "when the cast is announced people are gonna shit" — featuring the full Blues Bros line-up (Steve Cropper, 'Duck' Dunn et al) and special guests like Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin and Cab Calloway. And with Belushi, of course, will be Dan Aykroyd, who's co-written the script with Landis.

Then next winter he'll be here making *An American Werewolf In London* "which is very funny but not a comedy at all. It's extremely frightening. It's gonna scare the shit outta people. I'm going to make them laugh then grab that laugh by the throat."

He wrote the script when he was 19 and has been trying to get it filmed ever since. All it took awas the phenomenal success of *Animal House*. Right now Landis could proffer the idea of filming his Bell Telephone bill, and *someone* would take him up on it. Yet *Animal House* might have been a very different film. In the original script — by Doug Kenney, Chris Miller and Harold Ramis — the pungent flavour of *National Lampoon* magazine was more pervasive.

"I can't take any credit for the script, but I made them rewrite it. Doug, Chris and Harold were all in college fraternities in 1962 (Landis was 12), which was a seminal year in the US, truly the last year of the '50s.

"The humour was a lot crueller in the original script, so I made them tone it down. The Toga Party, for instance, was originally a Pig Party — that's a horrendous thing where boys bring the ugliest girls they can find, without telling the girls that's why they're asking them. The prize was awarded to the guy with the ugliest date — very mean.

"There were very funny things in it, but it was harsh and unpleasant. See, *National Lampoon* always has things in it that are funny, but there's always something in it that offends me. It genuinely hates women — the writers are terrified of girls, *terrified* of them — and it's extremely racist, very anti-semitic.

"I have a very moral view of comedy. I'm your classic liberal person. *Lampoon* isn't immoral, it's amoral — which is worse. I have to make movies about people you like, people you care about.

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"I think *Animal House* is quite sweet, really. It's played naturalistically for the most part — because you need to know and love these characters — except occasionally everything goes *woooooh!* and it's Three Stooges time. The John Belushi character is like Harpo Marx actually, but he does things that humans just can't do."

He's a composite of all the gross-out figures you've ever known?

"Yes, he is. But I think of him more as a primal force than a gross-out figure. I don't think he's *that* gross, in fact. Belushi is one of the most extraordinarily gifted performers I've ever met. He's not only a good comic, he's a fine actor *and* a great singer.

"I envisaged Bluto as a cross between Harpo Marx and *Sesame St's* Cookie Monster, basically charming and very sweet. And John was able to do all those insane things, like downing a bottle of Jack Daniels in one, and still manage to retain his charm. I mean, it's very difficult for a performer — I'm serious about this — to spit out those potatoes at people and still have the audience totally on his side."

As Landis is so obviously enthusiastic about everything he turns his hand to, I wondered what were his seminal influences.

"I had an interview with Derek Malcolm *(Grauniad* and *Cosmoplitan)* the other day," he replies, grimacing. "He's

Landis (left): "See — quit smoking and grow a beard!"

Belushi (for it is he): "Burp . . ."

kind of a pompous little guy and he asked me that. I rattled off Howard Hawks, Leo McCarey, George Stevens — and then I realised, ooooh, I didn't mention Hitchcock, Kubrick or Kurosawa; oops, I left out Capra. There are too many great film-makers.

"I do have favourite directors, but it's difficult . . . I see everything and I've seen everything ever made."

I was told at film college that that was the best way to learn.

"Sure. Not many people realise that it's just as difficult to make a bad movie as it is a good one. You can learn just as much from a bad movie. Absolutely. And read comic books — they're very often extremely good story boards."

The lady in Landis' life is Deborah Nadoolman, costume designer on *Kentucky Fried Movie* and *Animal House.* I remind him that — small world that it is — Peter Bogdanovitch fell for *his* designer, Polly Platt.

"Umm," he reflects. "I've never thought of that. Just think — I could get to make *At Long Last Love.*"

I'm off for a fag, I say, and he gives me an old-fashioned look.

Monty Smith

Invasion Of The Body Snatchers

Directed by Philip Kaufman
Starring Donald Sutherland, Brooke Adams and Leonard Nimoy
(United Artists)

"People are strange when you're a stranger/Faces are ugly when you're alone", sang Jim Morrison. And how many times have you been shuffling down a busy street only to stop, seized by blind, unreasoning panic, and wonder just who or, more disturbingly, just *what* are all the people and faces around you? You've never felt the sudden brush of such dark, enfolding wings? I don't believe you.

Invasion Of The Body Snatchers is the film of the film of the book. Philip Kaufman's remake swaps the cramped Middle American community of Jack Finney's book and Don Siegel's 1956 film for an equally oppressive contemporary San Francisco.

The shift of location from small town to big city is peculiarly appropriate as it echoes the drastic changes in social climate that have overtaken the USA (and the rest of the West) in the last 20 years. To wit — in the mid '50s, most 'right-thinking' Americans were uptight about the 'outside' threat to the clean ideal of the nuclear family posed by anything from Communists to UFOs; in the late '70s, however, most Americans of most persuasions seem more uptight about the 'inside', about themselves and other people. And nowhere is that newfound unease better expressed than in the inner-city.

The gist of *Body Snatchers* is ingenious. Like George Romero's *The Crazies,* it improvises on the distinctly paranoid premise that nobody is necessarily what they appear to be. For all we know or are told in these last days of top-heavy bureaucracy and 'open' (i.e. closed) government, we could be surrounded by aliens or mutants in human form and be none the wiser for it.

Body Snatchers goes several stages further though and maliciously crosses our emotional wires. We naturally root for Matthew Bennell (Donald Sutherland as a harassed and overworked health inspector) and Elizabeth Driscoll (Brooke Adams as his hassled and confused research assistant), nudging them on as they uncover the 'conspiracy' and fight off the 'invasion' as best they can.

But then we're informed that the results of the alien takeover could be paradoxically beneficial; we're promised a future-perfect of vegetable passivity: no more love, hate, emotions or wars. So do we surrender our precious humanity and individuality or continue to make do with imperfect and irrational but oddly lovable old *homo sapiens?*

A twister to be sure. Meanwhile Matthew's blind faith in civic authority (the police, the city council, and so on) is touching, but misguided; he's obviously heading for a fall. The bullshit popular psychology bandied about by Dr David Kibner *(Star Trek's* Leonard 'Mr Spock' Nimoy, but an able enough actor to cut the connection) and the everyman's para-scientific doggerel placed in the mind and mouth of Nancy Bellicec (Veronica Cartwright) are both plainly inadequate: sops not solutions. Jeff Goldblum's engaging, amusing but depressing tantrums as neurotic would-be poet Jack Bellicec are much more the real index of probabilities.

The alien method — the process by which they duplicate humans — is depicted in all its grotesque detail at the film's mid-point, but these revelations are hardly final. Kaufman's direction remains tense and concise, although it tends to rely on rather too many tricks of the trade. His insistence on unconventional and extreme camera angles certainly piles on the pressure, but it becomes wearing and intrusive at times, as do both Douglas Stewart's impressive but overly abrupt editing and Denny Zeitlin's unsettling but often exaggerated score.

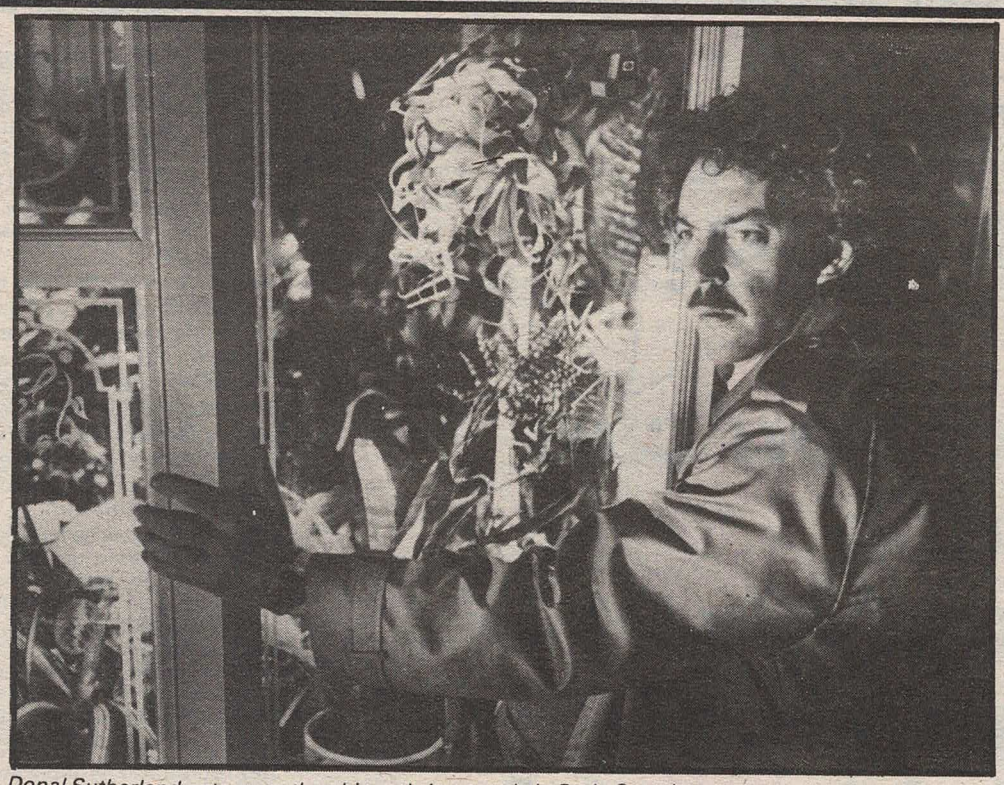
All cinema manipulates in one way or another, but the secret's to keep an audience unaware of the machinery of manipulation — and *Body Snatchers* occasionally tries too hard for its own good in this respect.

Which isn't to say it's tame. Anything but. The mood of mounting anxiety is carefully orchestrated. The obvious ironies (who's gone 'veg' and who hasn't?) are well exploited by W D Richter's script. The cameo appearances of both Kevin McCarthy — the hero of the original film — and Don Siegel — its director — and both integral, not just sly nods aimed at film buffs.

Minor quibbles aside, *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* is deliciously scary. Obsessive paranoids will probably conclude it's all a devious parable about how West Coast soft-rock is blunting the emotional sensibilities of the entire Western world.

But whatever, people *are* strange. Aren't they?

Angus MacKinnon



Donal Sutherland gets more than his curls in a tangle in Body Snatchers.

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Director of Photography OSWALD MORRIS B.S.C. · Special Visual Effects by ALBERT WHITLOCK · Screenplay by JOEL SCHUMACHER · Produced by ROB COHEN
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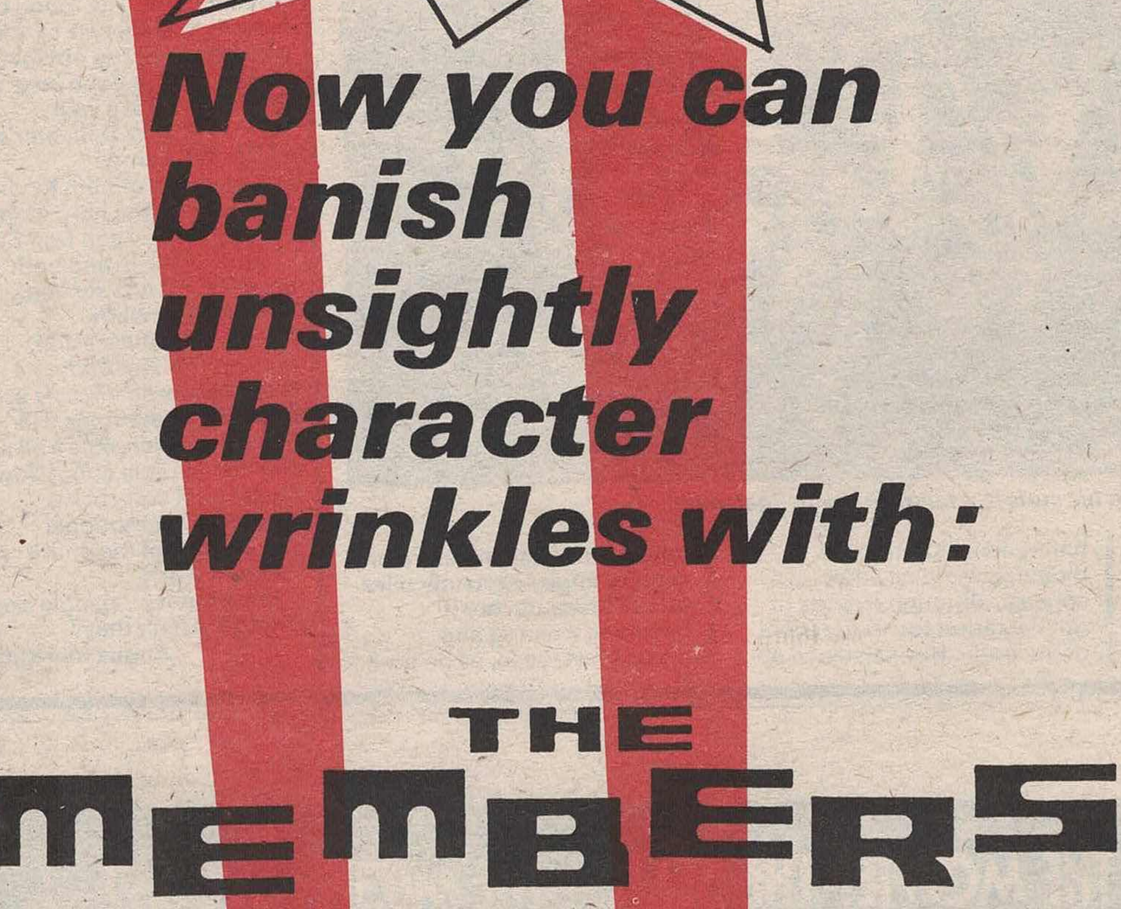

THE MEMBERS l. to r. Nicky Tesco, Adrian Lillywhite, Nigel Bennett, Chris Payne, J.C.

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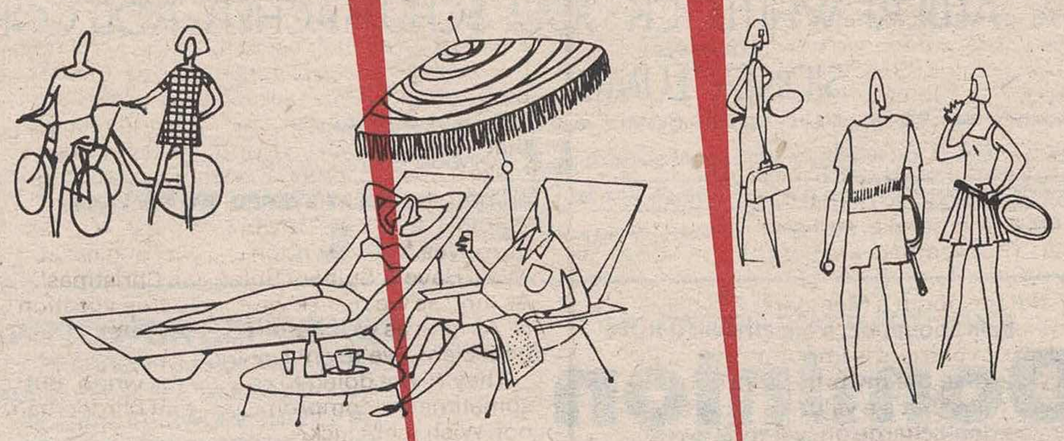


FACT: YOU'RE either on the case or off the case. Thus do I reflect, as I smugly shoot down to prim Portsmouth on a clean, quick train to meet up with those merry misfits The Members, having wrested the week's plum assignment from the clutches of no less a personage than 'editor' Neil 'Jah Jah' Spencer.

The brightest, breeziest bippety-pop entertainers currently ascending to nationwide acceptance are nearing the end of a month-long mini-package tour with The Magnets and Eddie And The Hot Rods, the first real meet-the-nation exercise of The Members' young lives, and my job is to extract the facts and the feelings from the lads as they hurtle towards superstardom.

I arrive at the gauche and glittery Portsmouth Locarno just after five, an hour before the scruffy, smiling Members pour through the doors of the empty dance hall. The irrepressible Nicky Tesco, shy bass player Chris Payne, smart, composed drummer Adrian Lillywhite, abrasive guitarist Nigel Bennett and the man with the smoothest complexion, biggest vocabulary and cutest haircut in the band, guitarist J.C.

As the group fiddle about awaiting a soundcheck, J.C. explains to me why Spencer is so unusually fond of the Virgin five-piece.

"He's after my girl friend," he discloses, and I immediately sympathise, suffering as I do from that same irritating problem. Y'see, Spencer ain't too capable when it comes to girls — in fact it's a major character inadequacy — and here, appropriately, we get to the crux of The Members' appeal. The more inadequate and deficient you are, the more The Members will appeal to you. If you're perfect, you won't like them at all.

They won't fill the hole in your life, but they'll help you forget it and maybe begin to fill it in.

The Members sing about silly, simple things, and do it with style. Their lyrics deal with pathetic characters, trivial frustrations, minor irritations, unimportant failures; so if you're lonely or spotty, you daydream a lot, the beard won't come, the figure won't fill out, your mum won't leave you alone ("You're not going out dressed like that"), the girls/boys all laugh at you, you can't do anything right, your life's intolerably dull — then The Members are the band for you.

The Members know what it's like to be a blemished bungler. You really wouldn't believe it now, but the five mature and manly members of The Members were once totally inadequate and inferior, but they got over that and offer hope to all those who feel confined and unsure. Isn't that wonderful! These boys are now so special they have to pretend to be ordinary, and if they can get that far, then you can too!

"We stand for the social underdog," Nicky Tesco once remarked, "like the spotty kid in the class. We're not into direct political songs. What I like us to do is take a kid's situation and reflect it in the lyrics, and if people listen maybe they'll realise they're being fucked about."

IF YOU'RE NOT a pop music fan (who is!) and wonder just what's going on and who these people are, swallow some brief history.

The Members are a bunch of artless southern suburbanites who slogged for many months in the immediate post-punk depression, determinedly fighting the censorship of the London gig circuit, slipping through a couple of line-up changes, gradually building a heavy following with a lusty mixture of mainstream punk and scrawny punk, grabbing any scrap of a gig. They were allowed by Stiff to record 'Solitary Confinement', one of their more concentrated cartoons, but Stiff were unmoved by the group's complaints that promotion was non-existent and let it die an undeserved death. The group battled on.

"No one can say," Tesco grunts, shamelessly using the very best rock'n'roll terminology, "that we haven't paid our dues. We had a real hard time at the beginning . . . when we lived in a cardboard box, rehearsed in a toilet and ate other people's teabags."

Virgin Records, with the grimacing grace of the kindest exploiters, plucked them away from all that, and The Members followed up 'Confinement' with another effectively trivial, superbly structured charge of useless defiance, 'Sound Of The Suburbs'. As J.C. boasts, "The sound of the suburbs caught the imagination of the nation and we became an overnight sensation."

The Members have followed up *that* hit single with yet another exquisite pop single, "Off Shore Banking Business' — "The best white reggae I've heard," Spencer sighs. It's The Members' first real reggae song, justification enough of their determination to stir reggae's tricky rhythms into their own brand of rock.

They aim not for the music's raw emotional power but for the specific dance beat. J.C. has no delusions about the sound The Members have achieved on this single.

"As a part-time reggae freak, I know that we're not interpreting the music as well as it could be done. We're just trying hard to bring the rhythm across. I realise we're not doing justice to reggae. If somebody like Gregory Isaacs or Dennis Brown recorded it it would be great, because it is a great fucking song. I will pat myself on my back.

"Really, the reason we did this single like we have done — it's like a little crusade — is to make a lot of people aware of reggae, and The Members having had a hit single have a fairly good chance of having a strong hit with reggae.

"It is a reggae record to some extent. It brings across what I feel is good in reggae music. There is an awful lot of room in English music for this type of thing. I mean, I'd hate to be the punk Average White Band of reggae. We're just trying to do something on our own terms. I don't know whether it works or not. It's just something we feel we have to do."

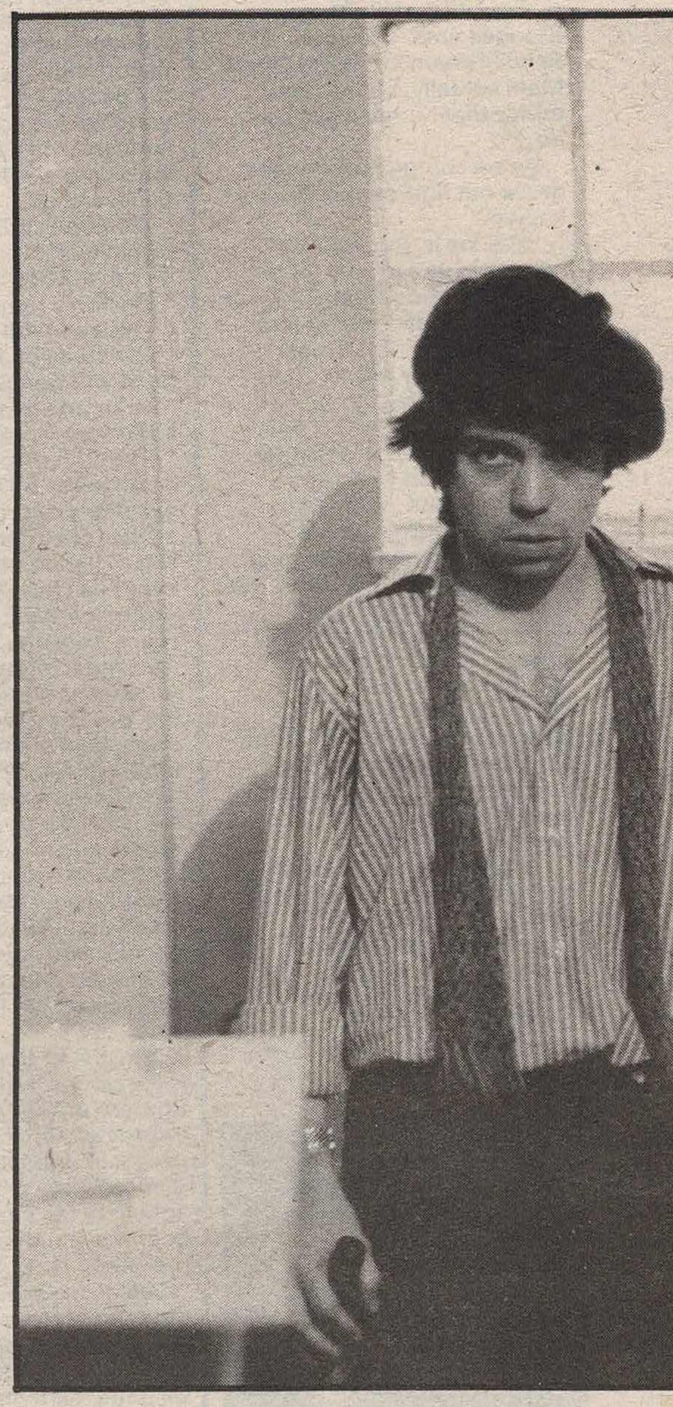
AFTER HANGING about twittering and bantering for an hour, faulty equipment denies the group the comfort of a soundcheck. Everyone is herded together, and we file outside into The Members' solitary, concession to luxury, a glorious Fiat travelmobile fitted out with a powerful sound system, toilets and beds. As this splendid group possession speeds through Portsmouth's tidy streets towards their hotel it veers close to the port. Navy vehicles are plenty in the vicinity. 24-year-old Nicky Tesco, who has the chubby sad look of a Tony Hancock, the stiff cool of a Humphrey Bogart, the abrupt idiocy of an Bill Oddie, stares thoughtfully at the navy parapher nalia. "I tell you," he says, "I've seen more of this country being in The Members than I would being in the navy."

As Tesco sits in conversation throughout the night, he unintentionally reveals the pressures and perversions of impending fame, the responsibilities being forced upon him as each day he elbows closer and closer to being a star. There's the undisguised pleasure of starring in a successful pop group, mixed with the suppressed knowledge of the traumas of adapting, of feeling 'normal' life drift away and some crazy, unreal existence clutch his throat.

As the Fiat tears through Portsmouth,

Here's what after only me

NICKY TESCO, former insurance salesman and student, found himself in an Earl's Court bedsi inner meaning. He says: "I've seen more of Bri The Members than I would being in The Navy.



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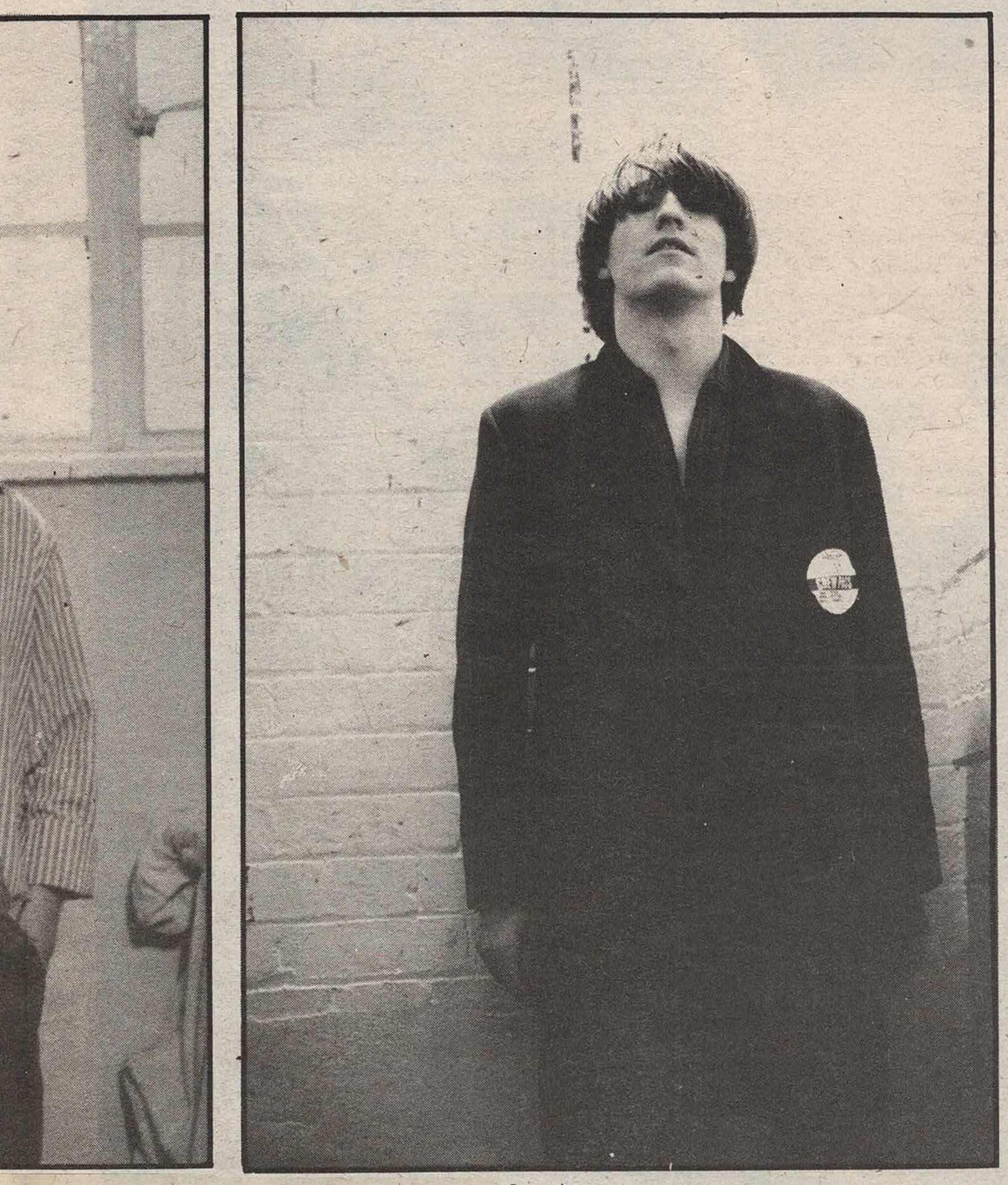
J.C. had a good job in a bank for three years before taking up full time Membership. Now he says: "I have totally lost touch with people on the street. I don't know what day of the week it is."



Tesco's thoughts wander, expressing the joy of performance, the perverse affection for the early struggling days, the confusion of his role . . .

"I really like playing. We're at our happiest when we're gigging, when we're on the road.

"When I was a sales rep I used to come to Portsmouth to sell Radox. It was great. I had a white Escort, which I used to drive the band around in. It was a real state when I gave it them back. The only thing that kept the band together in those early days was the three definitive Fords — two Escorts and an Anglia estate. They got us around the toilet gigs in London.

"It's still like a great big joke, The Members, y'know — like I love playing, I've always wanted to be in a band, I've always wanted to be on the road, and suddenly we're on the road, we're in the charts, we've got a great van with a better sound system than I've got at home, y'know we're successful!"

Does he feel in any way guilty about his comparative luxury, his success, his attitude, his luck?

"Naah! Why should I feel guilty? We've worked hard, we've grafted. I mean I wouldn't feel guilty if I'd got a good job in sales, and I was supposed to be working for the rest of my life 9-5, I wouldn't feel guilty if I got promotion, or if I got a good job, or if I became an assistant bank manager — I wouldn't feel guilty about that, so why should I feel guilty about what I'm doing now? We were all doing day jobs until four days before we signed up . .

"One thing I really can't take seriously is the whole onstage thing, the whole adulation — it is a little bit funny. Like we did this gig at the Nashville, the last one we can probably do there, and there was this bird at the front shouting 'Nicky Nicky Nicky I really love you'. That was really funny. I'm not laughing at her, it was just funny she should do all that about me. I mean she was a beautiful looking bird . . . if she knew me she'd probably think I was a real prick."

After drink and frivolous chat at the hotel, the Fiat ferries everybody back for the performance. Me and Nicky walk into the Locarno chatting about the weather, and there by the entrance are a couple of fixed smily smiley cops. "Any bother?" Nick asks worriedly. "No," chuckles one of the imposing chaps.

Upstairs in the dressing room, Tesco hears that the venue is not letting anyone in under 18. He's furious. The news halts the flow of cheery quips, whips the smile away. He stomps off, manages to get one kid in, returns helpless and miserable. So much is beyond even the group's control.

"There's a load of kids out there," Tesco cries, "and the police are checking that the place doesn't let them in. Ugh!" he spits. "I'm not wanting to be on a soapbox or anything — it just makes me think back to when I was a kid trying to get myself into a gig and they wouldn't let me in 'cos they realised I was under 18. And it's sick 'cos you don't want to drink you just want to see the band. You can't even *afford* a drink . . . and then you've got to eat a packet of polos so yer mum don't know what you've been up to."

THE MEMBERS on stage. Loud and lively. They don't play narrow pogo punk, but imaginatively paced nimble pop. J.C. prides himself on the group's subtlety. Their songs are springy, shaded, solid, projected with affable animation by the facetious Tesco, performed with surprising musical agility. It's a compelling and punchy show, a piece of crude theatre full of pathos, caricature, mock angst, mild spite, cheap accusations, the group frolicking about on the farcical side of satire and irony.

The versatility and vigour of their music is well represented on their brand new long player, 'At The Chelsea Nightclub', which is little more than a greatest hits collection, presented in much the same order as their live act — from 'Electricity', the looming instrumental that opens their set with mocking pomp, to 'Chelsea Nightclub', the beaty wonder that ends it — sharply played, sharply produced (by Steve Lillywhite, Adrian's brother, who did 'The Scream'), sharply sleeved (the cover is in fact sleeve of the year — who is this Malcolm Garrett and why does he keep designing these wonderful covers?!) It's exaggerated, moronic, direct, assorted.

"When you come and see The Members, when you hear them, you're reminded of the funny things in your life. It's not fantasy or anything like that. It's exaggerated. It's like a Woody Allen film."

Ah this show, during the driving 'Chelsea Nightclub' violence erupts, the group's roguish aggression having more impact than their cheeky defiance. Tesco handles it directly and swiftly by adding some angry lines to the song aimed at the fighters. The Members encore, but the fighting continues after the show.

Tesco is disgusted and deflated at this — even more than before the show when the kids couldn't get in — with the despair that destroys the kick of performing, that too often confronts those pop performers whose music is wilfully expressive and accessible.
At times like this the puzzled inarticulacy, fumbling helplessness of people like Tesco slips starkly into view, when they're rudely slammed to earth by the complex problems of playing mild agitpop to a large, ignorant ass. The unasked for but inevitable repsonsibility puts pressure on Tesco's narrow, naive perspective. After the gig, he is down, only his fizzy extroversion fighting away the pessimism.

"That's really the first time any of that has happened," he sighs, "at any of our gigs. There was six of them beating up one kid."

"Sham had it," pipes up a young fan, unhelpfully.

"That really is the first time we have had such intense aggro. We've had minor scuffles . . . These kids just don't realise that they're fighting each other and not fighting outwardly together . . . When there was that fight I thought to myself I can do two things here: I can walk off stage, which is silly, or stay and say something, try and control it, which I did. Maybe I went over the top with what I said. I just really don't want to see people being hit. Those kids, they get searched coming in, they get things taken off them and they still fight, they've had a bit of Babylonian oppression at the door and then they come in and they want to bring even more down on their heads. When are they going to realise?

"Y'know," Tesco spurts, sounding more and more like full-flight Pursey, "I'm not so naive to think that kids are going to stop fighting. Messing about — it's part of growing up, but at least when you come to a gig you should leave the fighting behind. To start with, the only person who gets anything out of a gang is the person leading it. People should realise this. The day everyone is their own chief is the day we're going to stop morons beating little kids up. I don't need it. I don't need to see it. No one does."

Does he see pressure pushing down on him on a Pursey level? The Members are attempting to provoke young kids — kids whose attitudes seem so narrow-minded — with humour and absurdity, and because they're right there at the 'battle front' they're receiving the full force of the effects. The fragile balance between the realism of communication and the personal fantasy of performing is dangerously disturbed and the game becomes something more . . .

"No. I don't see pressure becoming too great, Because maybe in some respects I am superficial. I could walk out of here now and see some bird and chat her up and have a laugh. I don't think there's any pressure on me. If I felt it too much there wouldn't be any point being in the business.

"You know fucking well what's going to happen if you're a rock'n'roll performer. I'm not naive enough not to know what's around the corner. I just want people to put away their bottles and knives. Like the black youths in London — for the past five years they've been fighting each other and others and just lately there's been a decrease and you know why that is? It's because a lot of those kids have become rastaman and they realised that they weren't going to get any further by beating up old ladies. They got their music and it's a real unifying aspect. That's what those kids need."

THE UNUSUAL and creatively exciting thing about The Members is that there are two passionately opinionated spokespeople in the group, two unique talents, two different approaches: something that should spread the load of attention. The irreverent Tesco and the responsible J.C. are two strong, complementary and contradictory characters, whose different outlooks and backgrounds shape The Members' sound and supply the insight and inventiveness.

"Me and Nicky have a lot of arguments about what we do but they're constructive arguments. We're really at opposite spectrums."

J.C. is broadly speaking the vision of the band; Tesco is the character. J.C. is a very special, natural composer, who is responsible for the best songs ('Solitary Confinement', 'Sound Of The Suburbs', 'Banking Business'); only Tesco could put them over so arrogantly and appropriately.

J.C. is also the practical theorist in the group. His attempts to define the purpose bf The Members is simple, straightforward and unspoilt; The Members are not politicians, he insists.

"My attitude about a Members show, alright, we talk about police and oppression — to break down barriers is important and we don't ignore that, but my prime function is to entertain. I think that's a valuable function, as long as you don't charge on telling Irish jokes, as long as you entertain with subtlety.

"Bands who try and bring about changes in society are hypocrites and it's futile to try. We're just trying to make people more aware of their situation, but we know we're not really important.

"Entertainment is the business we're in — I want people to have a good time. If I was a black in America I'd probably be singing 'I want your love, I want your love'. As it is we're an ethnic English rock group with a touch of reggae for people to enjoy themselves. You've got to reach out and grab people by the throat. You don't want people standing there going, 'Oh my that's jolly uncompromising.' What I want to do is write songs with points of view and put them over as accessibly as possible."

Market Research: PENNIE SMITH

DURING THE evening I get a chance to chat with J.C.'s dad, who is a traffic controller at nearby Southampton Airport. A charming, cultured man who speaks with a soft French accent, his reflections put gentle perspective onto The Members' development; they are five young, excited kids disappearing into a strange world that doesn't have to be that strange but probably will be.

"I saw him on *Top Of The Pops* once, but I only had a very small black and white television so I couldn't really appreciate it. I had been warned that he was doing well and that he might be doing *Top Of The Pops* and in a way I wasn't surprised, because I know he is very enthusiastic. I admire his guts — after all he taught himself music, he never had guitar lessons, and the only encouragement he got at home was when he was playing his guitar too loud was to shut up. In spite of which he carried on. He's got plenty of guts, I'll say that for him. I have seen him in action once, at a small reception, and I was amazed at the way he could actually project himself to the audience.

"I admire the group very much. I know that they work very hard and I only hope that it doesn't take too much out of them. I am worried that he might suffer from nervous fatigue eventually — after all one of the colleagues did (bassist Pyne, who needed a two-week rest and was replaced by The Planets' bass player). But I think that apart from that he has got his head well screwed on, but I only hope that if he does become too successful it won't go to his head. That will be one of the dangers."

J.C. appreciates how much he and The Members are changing, has some objective understanding of the unreality of the world he's slipping into, and grasps the problems of populism more readily than Tesco.

"The one thing that does upset me is that, six months into the business, I have totally lost touch with people on the street. No way haven't I. I admit it. I live in hotels. I speak to crew, porters, liggers, groupies and that's it. On nights off I'll go to the pub and have a drink, but really I've fucking lost touch. But I've got to keep going on.

"I don't know what fucking day of the week it is . . . The songs I'm writing now have nothing to do with the old songs. There's nothing I can do about what's happening. I spend most of my time in hotels. How can I be a street hero? I'm living in a different world from most people.

"I've always prided myself on the fact that the Members are about ordinary people, but now maybe it's going to be different, but I wanted to and do want to play rock'n'roll. I worked in a bank for three years, I could've been there for the rest of my life. I started with The Members and it's just escalated."

As it tends to. But, as J.C.'s father says, "When he gave up that good job at the bank I said to myself, bully for him, he's getting away from it all to do what he wants to do. And after all isn't that what matters in life? Rather than being tied down to a job, being tied down to security. He's still young, he's still unattached. Let him taste life on his own terms."

The Members are a new pop group. They liven up a lot of lives without presuming or pretending to authority or awesome ability. They are entertainers. Everything else, however important or even destructive, is a side effect. For now.

J.C. knows The Members' relative importance on the scale of impact. "Rock people are going to change the world as much as TV comedians."

I swept out to Portsmouth on a drive of enthusiasm and envy at The Members' lifestyle. I returned humbly respectful of the price — the ridicule, the accusations, the complex pressure — the group have to pay for their fame and their escape. At the moment, they're riding a peak; and they're destined to be enormous. The cracks already show.

"We've just got to keep on making records that are enjoyable, on a physical level, that make a good statement, on maybe a slightly humorous level. We don't ever want to be boring. I mean, we'll even take the piss out of ourselves. We've written a great song called 'We'll Have A Solitary Suburban Christmas'. As long as we realise where our true vocation is. As long as we stay direct. We're not politicians, we're not leaders."

They're not going to change the world. But sometimes to compromise is a lot harder than not. Wish them luck?

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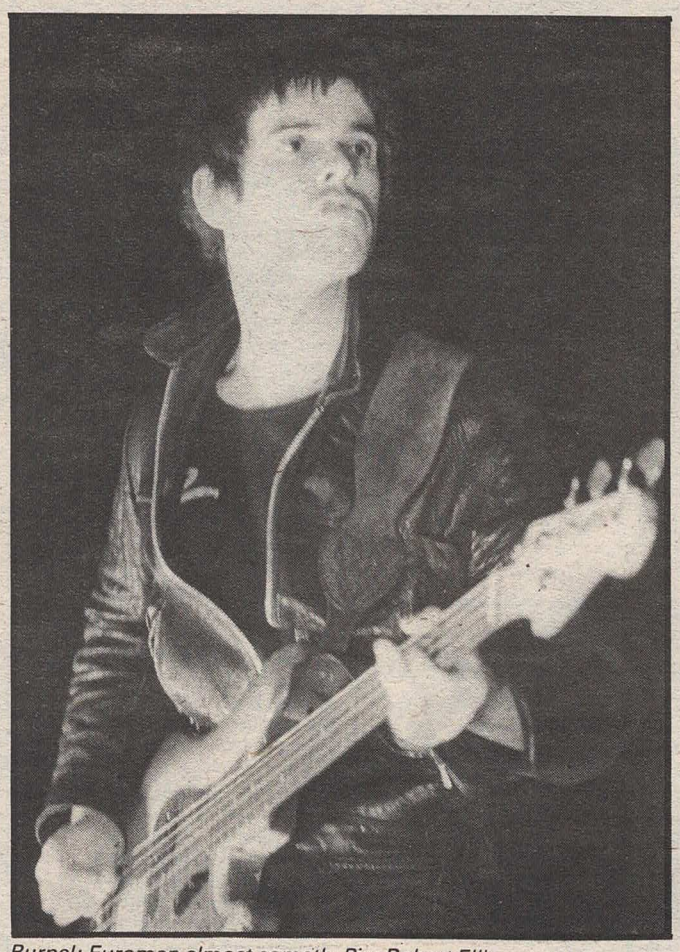
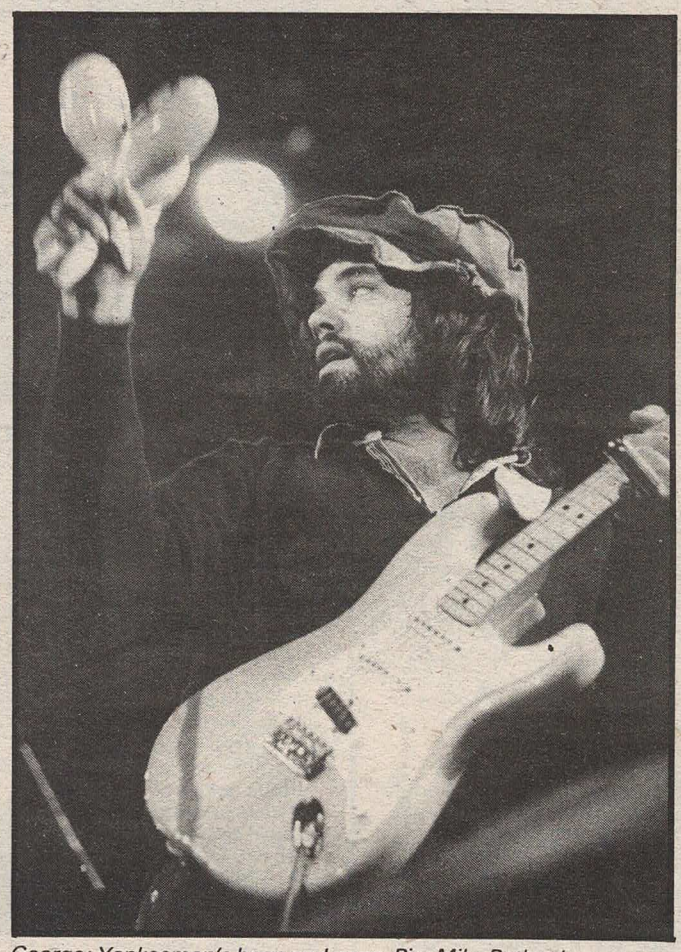


Burnel: Euroman almost cometh. Pic: Robert Ellis



George: Yankeeman's been and gone. Pic: Mike Putland

Euroman: no match for a hard-working Yank

J. J. Burnel comes up against good ol' Lowell — and loses.

J. J. BURNEL
Euroman Cometh
(United Artists)

It was the 19th Century Italian poet Leopardi who put it best: "Great truths are discovered only by a faculty of reason in a condition of near-enthusiasm" — or something like that.

He was talking about metaphysics, mind, and though I wouldn't dream of making such grand claims for rock ('great truths' in rock music? Ha!), with a little semantic stretching here and there, this concept of 'rational ecstasy' can be made to apply to rock music, neatly sheltering 'neath the one umbrella talents as diverse as Berry, Dylan, Zappa, Steely Dan, Ubu and The Ramones, and providing a succinct explanation of why the post-Rotten Pistols are so lame.

Jean-Jacques Burnel's first solo album, unfortunately, is not the product of rational ecstasy.

Burnel, as he never tires of telling us, is undoubtedly possessed of a faculty of reason, but 'Euroman Cometh' sees this faculty not in a state of near-enthusiasm so much as a state of mere titillation. Both the theoretical bases underlying the concept, and the musical realisation thereof, lack rigour: J.J. (as he's called on the album), in testing his theories, has attempted to prove them rather than search for facts which falsify them, and has decked his argument in the surface trappings of the 'New' European music.

The result is a well-meaning album which promises a lot but frustratingly fails — bar a few isolated cases — to deliver.

The cover, a shot of J.J., legs akimbo, dwarfed by the pipes, rods and rails of the Pompidou Centre, strikes the right 'industrial' tone, but it's the inner sleeve that really gets down to business: four maps depicting the extent of the European empires of chronologically, Charlemagne, Cromwell, Napoleon and Hitler, and another couple showing Soviet Europe and the EEC.

The inference seems to be that once-mighty Europe (the tradition Burnel sees himself as descended from) is now small and weak, and that Soviet influence is a wave of encroachment slowly spreading over Europe, halted only by the valiant EEC.

This is, of course, a truism. But what I find interesting about the maps is that although Charlemagne, Cromwell, Napoleon and Hitler were undoubtedly geniuses (of a certain Machiavellian type), they were also dictators who forcibly united Europe by oppression; their Europes were not the spontaneous, voluntary comminglings of cultures necessary for a strong union — which is perhaps why the empires all perished.

Seen in this light, the Soviet and EEC maps take on an ironic light — the one unashamedly totalitarian, the other a more subtle shift in that direction, borne of 'economic necessity' (the new dictator); *power*-political unions rather than *people*-political. The Kraftwerkian view takes this into account: their 'Man-Machine' is a cautionary poke in the ribs, not a welcoming fanfare . . .

This is where, I think, Burnel's reasoning goes awry: the leap from economic union to cultural union inherent in the concept of Euro*man* (if man is to be seen as an individual rather than an economic unit) is logically invalid.

Personally, I'd welcome a bit more cultural give and take for the effect it might have on the moribund state of British philosophy, literature and visual arts, but I can't honestly see it happening for the simple reason that Europe is composed of Old World nations deeply entrenched in their own traditions, and with their own dominant social and psychological characteristics. Without resorting to the crass, insulting stereotypical reduction of that banal *Mind Your Language* sit-com, it's possible to talk of such characteristics: a culture is merely a particular realisation of the general human potential, after all, and in that case, *vive la difference*, eh?

Musically, it has to be admitted that 'Euroman Cometh' makes a refreshing change (for the better) from The Stranglers' recent output, especially that awful live album; also, that it demonstrates the openness with which Burnel receives new musical ideas.

It opens with 'Euroman', a sombre statement of policy based round a shuffling drum-machine and surprisingly reticent bass, with interjections from a distant distorted guitar. Burnel's vocals are in a (thankfully) stilted, deliberate, unemotional French, and proclaim his descent from the great dictators.

An inauspicious opening, redeemed somewhat by 'Jellyfish', the next track, which bounces along merrily and resembles something off The Residents' 'Buster & Glen'. Again, as on most of 'Euroman Cometh', Burnel uses an untreated drum-machine instead of drums, which gives the album a rather flat, static feel: sort of Edmundo Ros meets Brian Eno. In general, a drum-machine's best treated with a few effects, its naked sound being intrinsically bland and lacking attack, as an album's-worth painfully demonstrates.

This notwithstanding, 'Jellyfish' (or several other tracks, for that matter) would make a far better single than the pedestrian 'Freddie Laker (Concorde & Eurobus)', on which Burnel's vocals are distorted to the point of incomprehensibility, which is quite a neat way of avoiding their being criticised, I suppose.

'Euromess' features less harshly distorted vocals, and seems to be a call for solidarity based round a repeated chorus of *"Don't rely on lies"*. It's quite engaging, in a meandering sort of way, but nothing special.

'Deutschland Nicht Uber Alles', which closes the side, uses a constant drum-figure with occasional treated snare shots (which is quite effective), but suffers from indeterminate melody and backing. My German's almost non-existent, but the phrase *"American colony"* comes through loud and clear, suggesting, along with the title, a tilt at German acceptance of subjugation. An easy target, I reckon.

The second side manages to do slightly better than two out of five. 'Do The European' is J.J.'s stab at disco, descending flanged bass-line and shuffling drums underpinning his avowal that *"I could have been born in Tokyo or Delhi/I could have been born in New York or Sydney/I could have been a post-war East Berliner/But I was born of European issue."* Again, there's no melody worth speaking of, just rising and falling.

Best thing on the album — by a long stretch — is the instrumental 'Triumph (Of The Good City)', a tribute to the Meriden Workers' Co-op which allies a ticking-over motorbike (not one of those Japan buzz-boxes, either, but the throaty chuckle of a British Bonneville) to the ubiquitous drum-machine and pulls it off, mainly because care's been taken to make percussive use of the sound, rather than just having it slop around all over the place.

Eerie synth screeches dominate the track, but Burnel uses a semi-dub technique which prevents any instrument obtruding overmuch, slipping them in for a few bars and then out. It's easily the most fully-realised piece here, one of which Burnel makes constructive use of the elements of 'new music' instead of just giving the impression they're being used.

The other good track, a short R'n'B workout called 'Pretty Face', is a bit out of place on 'Euroman Cometh'. For one thing, it's the only non-original on the album (although its anti-subservient-female lyric could just as easily be Burnel's), and the frantic scrubbed rhythm guitar and harp (Brian James and Lew Lewis) intrude on the album's ambience like Arthur Mullard at the Aristotelian Society. Which may be the intention. Out of place but enjoyable.

So there we are. The other three tracks, 'Tout Comprendre', 'Eurospeed (Your Own Speed)' and 'Crabs', either bored or annoyed me — especially the totally awful latter — but the album in general's better than I'd imagined it would be. Indeed, if the care, attention and thought that went into 'Triumph' were in greater evidence elsewhere, 'Euroman Cometh' could have been (at least) a good album.

It just lacks rigour, that's all.

Andy Gill

LOWELL GEORGE
Thanks I'll Eat It Here
(Warner Brothers)

The real name of this album is 'Thank You! I'll Eat It Here!' which was the original name of Little Feat's 'Sailin' Shoes' and applied, obliquely, to the Neon Park cover painting of a disconcertingly feminine piece of cake swinging of a garden swing. A rather pointed visual pun on the notion of having one's cake and eating it, with the overtones perhaps a trifle too risque for the sensibilities of the time.

Present sensibilities might find this solo album by the erstwhile leader of Little Feat just as unusual, but then it's part of George's appeal that he's always been out of step with his contemporaries. When earlier in the decade the hard rock boogie and other horrible mistakes held sway, Little Feat could be counted on for inspiration and innovation — a dirty, physical rhythm and blues band streamlined musically and psyched-up lyrically for the '70s.

The past three years, during which this album was made, have witnessed a growing estrangement between George and his cohorts. He wrote only five of the 17 songs on their last two studio albums. They travelled apart and argued openly during the last British tour. Speculation mounted and rumours snowballed. It was held that George was saving his best for this — and it might also be noted that alienation (from one's surroundings) has long been a pet song topic of his.

So it's surprising to find that the bulk of the material comes from other pens, lending creedence to the frequent claims by the rest of the band that George had "hit a dry spell".

This dearth of George by-lines is the first and biggest disappointment. My palms sweated in anticipation of the parched metaphysical landscapes, poignant turn of phrase and surreal sense of humour that his songs have in the past contained. Lowell George, after all, was the man who wrote a song about the existential dilemma of a truck driver . . .

But though George could never be accused of being heavy going, this is a whole lot more lightweight.

The first side passes through versions of Allen Toussaint's 'What Do You Want The Girl To Do', Ann Peebles' 'I Can't Stand The Rain' and a re-work of 'Two Trains', barely pinning the attention down. Subsequent spins, however, reveal the understated excellence of Toussaint's plea on behalf of abused emotions, which George doesn't fluff, and I can't help but fall into the groove created on 'Two Trains', with its beat backsliding all over the place. 'I Can't Stand The Rain' and an original called 'Honest Man', both in the style of 'Spanish Moon', just don't happen, although the listener might enjoy hearing the Stax-type horns jam up a treat.

Side two is far more captivating, opening with the album's prime cut, the mariachi-flavoured 'Cheek To Cheek Chiquita', co-written by George and Van Dyke Parks — and it shows. Sublime modal changes subvert what could otherwise be a cloying picture of endless haciendas, turning it into a perfectly charming miniature. A whole album of this was once mooted — would that it had materialised.

Rickie Lee Jones' 'Easy Money' continues George's peculiar interest in the denizens of red light districts. *"One stepped forward, one stepped back, the other one loosened her shoulder strap"*. A tart little moral tale that exudes just the right sleaze quotient, low down horns an' all.

'20 Million Things To Do' is a slight piece of homespun pathos, presaging the deeper melancholy of 'Find A River,' the album's other prime cut and a moody ballad of love lost that, if you have tears, could make you drown in them.

The record closes with 'Himmler's Ring', a thoroughly whimsical coda that betrays the influence of Van Dyke Parks although no definite credit can be detected.

There you have it. It could only have been a Lowell George album — the vivid lyrical imagery and eclectic musical bases betray the hand that fed it. But it could have been a better Lowell George album.

Thanks anyway Lowell, I'll take it away.

Paul Rambali

Sound of the Suburbs: scorn or sadism?

TESCO: no longer gives Green Shield.

THE MEMBERS
At The Chelsea Nightclub ***(Virgin)***

The Members — an everyday story of Camberley folk starring cuddly ugly Nicky Tesco, dealer in trite stereo-types and women's magazine cliches, harmless and humourous as a rock'n'roll Mrs Dale ought to be.

Open the diary, they're all there: 'Sally', the local kid made good who gets disfigured in a car crash — the awful fate awaiting all would-be jet set models; 'Soho-A-Go-Go', where you meet soulless women who will destroy *your* soul — another awful fate for would be thrill-seekers; 'Solitary Confinement', the lonely bedsit awaiting all those who fall for the lure of London's tinsel; 'Frustrated, Bagshot', the jerk who jerks off in the darkness alone — the awful fate awaiting hung-up porn-mag consumers; 'Phone-In Show', where Samaritan cases discover the awful fate awaiting innocents who put themselves in the hands of contemptuous radio demagogues; 'Chelsea Nightclub', where the posers meet *their* lonely fate ...

'The Sound Of The Suburbs' indeed — a fistful of cautionary tales like your mother used to tell, only Nicky tells 'em better.

The album opens with a little Members dub called 'Electricity' by rhythm guitarist Jean-Marie Carroll, which shows off their blending of reggae and rock to far greater effect than the new single 'Offshore Banking Business' (not included here, incidentally — which is sensible, because it would be a complete sore thumb. I can understand Julie Burchill labelling it "white kids proving they don't dislike blacks" — Tesco shouldn't ever drop his Sarf London accent, either for awkward sincerity or pseudo-West Indian, both of which rub shoulders on the single).

'Electricity', though, is really good — atmospheric blips over an attractive bass riff alternating with some excellent rock guitar from Nigel Bennett, expertly produced by drummer Adrian Lillywhite's brother Steve, The Members display a fluent, sinuous side previously unrecorded.

That segues (as us bar-proppers say) into 'Sally', a terse rocker spliced with a neat reggae chorus: *'Everybody's got a daydream ...''* and Sally's modelling dream winds up in the whorehouse — possibly a comment upon people who sell their bodies (a parallel the song does draw), but couched in yer traditional paperback romance gruesome warning style. Written, incidentally, by the band's ex-guitarist Gary Baker.

Next up is Nicky Tesco and bassist Chris Payne's tour of Dean Street's massage parlours, 'Soho-A-Go-Go' — another fierce hard rock song replete with police messages over the lead break, Tesco warning the vice kings to *"clean up your state of mental health"*. As always, the construction is perfect, finely judged climaxes a-go-go (so to speak), with Tesco chucking in great Joey Ramonisms en route.

'Don't Push', more Cossack than Rasta, is a longtime stage highlight. Again, it's surprisingly powerful, Bennett yanking it along with abrasive guitar.

'Solitary Confinement' should be the side's crowning glory — it's a brilliant song — but instead of keeping to the point, which is quite ornate enough as it is, they drag it out into a dreadful jam at the end and rather piss it away. Still, who else could carry off that exquisite moment when the tragic chant *"On your own / By yourself / On your own / By yourself"* twists evilly into *"Buy yourself this record"*?

'Frustrated, Bagshot' opens the second side on a real low. As if the dreaded watery slide guitar wasn't bad enough, the song paints a vicious picture of sexual frustration, machismo mockery of the 'afflicted' — a theme repeated more sympathetically in the one completely 'straight' reggae song 'Stand Up And Spit', which is strangely reminiscent of XTC's 'My Weapon'.

'The Sound Of The Suburbs', as any fule kno, is a masterpiece, from the rabid illustration of Johnny annoying the neighbours with his punk rock electric guitar, to the woman next door who hasn't left her house since her husband died. Its confidence and sheer compositional flair rub off on the whole album.

'Phone-In Show' brings back the doubts: another skilfully drawn song, but although they put down the vicarious nature of phone-ins — *"Cheap entertainment / Phone-in show / Five minutes of glib advice / When you've got nowhere left to go"* — they seem to portray the guy who phones in with his hang-up with venomous glee. Hopefully I'm being unfair to them, and their concern to put life's losers in the harshest possible light is out of sympathy rather than sadism.

'Love In A Lift' is a good lop-sided reggae rock throwaway, and the wrap-up comes live from Hammersmith Odeon with the 'My Generation' mutation 'Chelsea Nightclub', featuring Tesco looking for the toilet in the midst of the chaos.

Before I heard this album I'd tagged The Members as a good night out, a band with more enthusiasm than technique despite some of the best lyrics currently on view and a couple of classic singles. Don't let the good buncha lads front fool you — they know what they're doing. The most surprising thing about 'At The Chelsea Nightclub' is how painstakingly it's been assembled. Each track literally overflows with little tricks and subtleties.

Whether they're trapped in sweet suburbia remains to be seen — certainly the awkward gestures of 'Offshore Banking Business' are not the way out.

And as for the occasional ideological slips, just put it down to the sad fact that rock'n'roll stars, unlike rock journalists of course, are not omniscient.

Phil McNeill

THE BEACH BOYS
LA (Light Album) ***(Caribou)***

Practically every self-respecting reviewer approaches each new Beach Boys album with a sense of optimism — to the extent of going to unprecedented lengths to find something that will not only vindicate the group but compensate for those times when they've failed to deliver.

Except for a brief respite in the shape of 'Surf's Up' (1971) and 'Holland' (1973), events have shown that The Beach Boys have spent practically all of the '70s engaged in the kind of con-game that makes McLaren's little escapade look like peanuts.

Undoubtedly the longest holding-operation in living memory, the Boys have wasted their energies on delayed tactics instead of coming to terms with reality. At one extreme they've been constantly haunted by the recurring success of their old back-catalogue whilst on a more personal level capitalising on Brother Brian's "eccentric genius" myth.

When, around '76, it was reported that Brian Wilson was again well enough to resume his creative function within the group, things turned sour from the start. The theraputic '15 Big Ones' was plagued by conflict, thus falling short of expectations. Not only did the album include material dating as far back as 'Sunflower', the Boys have reworked much of the production without Brian's knowledge. Its successor, 'The Beach Boys Love You' was yet another rag-bag, whilst their last album, the disastrous 'M.I.U.' — an obligatory contract filler for Warners — is best forgotten.

In retrospect it can be ascertained that the much-publicised bi-centennial "Brian Is Back" campaign backfired in amost horrendous manner. As events (publicly) demonstrated, Brian was far from being in control of his own actions (never mind the group's shaky career) and — despite their growing popularity as a live attraction — the sales of the two Wilson-produced albums corroborated the fact that The Beach Boys had yet to redeem their credibility.

After being put in charge of the last three albums Brian's contributions to 'LA' are restricted to two old tracks — the pleasant 'Good Timin' and the knockabout 'Shortnin' Bread', both of which have been gathering dust in the vaults for over three years.

But then — as at least half of this album reveals — desperate men make desperate moves and, therefore, mistakes. This album is practically all style and little content. The totally unlistenable efforts from Jardine and Love 'Lady Lynda' and 'Sumahama' stretch far beyond its natural limits. The same can be said for the totally incongruous and painfully contrived 'Here Comes The Night' (the original can be located on 'Wild Honey'). Eleven turgid minutes of self-indulgence which unsuccessfully attempts to hook-up with the present disco craze.

The group is reduced to relying on the work of just two writers — Brothers Dennis and Carl. If this album possesses any real strength, it's in Carl's contributions. 'Full Sail' and 'Angel Come Home' evoke shades of 'Sail On Sailor', but it's Carl's solo showcase, the stunning 'Goin' South', which is the one gem. Backing stripped to bare essentials, Carl croons a romantic and reflective ballad with the kind of inspired commitment one wishes was contagious.

'Light Album' indeed — don't play it with the window open, for the slightest breeze could blow it off the turntable.

Roy Carr

KIM FOWLEY
Sunset Boulevard ***(Illegal)***

When Kim Fowley attempts to make a living he tries to make it mostly off his history, using his latest product merely as an accessory to the Xeroxed novelette which lists what Kim had for tea on the night of March 11, 1967, how Mink DeVille *almost* (a killer, this) included one of his songs on their latest album, etc.

A shoddy thing, his career highpoints were writing and producing 'Nut Rocker' for B. Bumble And The Stingers and composing the B-side of the first Cat Stevens single (always the B-side . . .). It must wound him that he hasn't been in on any big con, or even one that broke even — The Runaways, his best and most famous baby, never

WILSON— he shoulda stayed in the sandpit.

They play Premier.

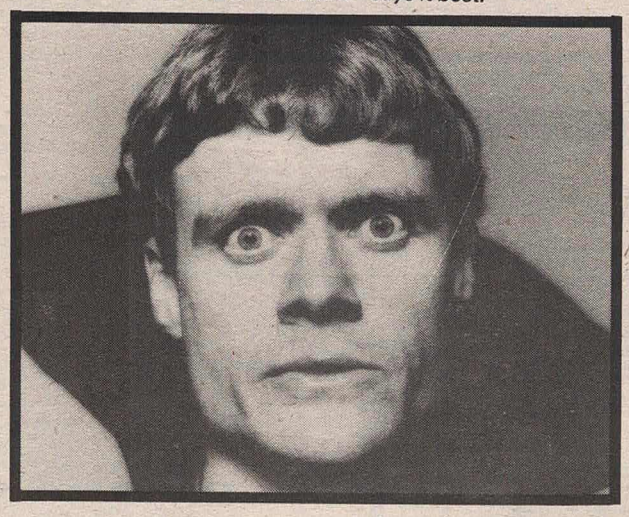
Richie Hayward Little Feat
Five drum Resonator outfit

Kenney Jones The Who
Nine drum Elite outfit

Clem Burke Blondie
Five drum Resonator outfit

Darrell Sweet Nazareth
Nine drum Elite outfit

FOWLEY: "eccentric" says it best.



touched any chart either here or in their own country.

His main handicap, face aside, is that the cannot write a tune; the reggae joke 'Rubber Rainbow' and his DeVille-rejected 'North American Man' suffer most obviously from this deformity, though every track is hindered by it.

'Nightingale' starts life as a Dylan parody *a la* 'In My Garage' (one of the more successful songs here), but is blighted by pride and attempts to turn into something straight halfway.

Fowley songs suffer from too many cooks would-be hooks, I fear; for a man with such faith in himself, he does write songs with an awful lot of people — four credits to one song happens on a third of the album, and never does he chance his luck or talent alone.

Another third of the material Kim tries to prop up by using the book-ends of mythical luscious LA jailbait, a legend that lies likeably limp after England had acquainted itself fully with the very cute, very talented yet very unexotic Joan Jett. The only thing the girls in Fowley's neighbourhood have more than ours is boredom — yet still Kim trades off being a native of California the way French girls often go to English-speaking countries and live off their sexy accents. In France, Francoise Pascal's gorgeous voice is the norm, and in California the likes of Lou Adler must smile at Fowley-size hustlers.

'Teenage Death Girl' is like some dreary song The Rolling Stones would do to be modern, except they would probably write a tune too; 'Love Is A Game' is a funny, clumsy Springsteen pastiche that somehow manages to be a little lovely whereas 'Black Camels Of Lavender Hill' is an artful Springsteen pastiche that's draggy.

The funniest one about California girls, however, is the title track in which Fowley and co-author Laurie Bell attempt to entice one even further into their cheap illusion like some sleazy tourist board: *"We're from Hollywood, California, U.S.A, don't forget,"* they keep repeating over their track played backweird, old magic words gone void.

Fowley attempts to semi-exploit as self-defence, to semi-mimic so that he always has his ridicule to fall back on when critics say he is below artistic par. If only he could admit that he is *only* adequate when parodying a big talent and *badly* craves a hit record, he could be big fun in the manner of the great Patti Smith gag Wayne County used to do: *"Jim-Morrison-in-a-bath-tub-in-Paris-France-jerking-off!"*

Kim's pretence of being the only thinking visionary in the rock'n'roll pleasure dome, though, is almost as ludicrous as it is laughable: I daresay his telecope-up-ass worldview was endearing in the Bel Air brat he once was, but for a man in his 40s it seems ignorant.

Still, he does seem to care about these certain small things like telling you where to write to him with all your hopes and ex-dreams for the '80s; of course, you *have* to court the public if they don't like you after all this time.

There is no way that Fowley is a nasty man. He is just an unsuccessful businessman — as rock'n'roll businessmen tend to be — and that's made him a bit . . . eccentric.

Julie Burchill

JERRY JEFF WALKER
Jerry Jeff ***(Elektra)***

I guess MCA's loss is Elektra's tax loss — my theory being that Jerry Jeff makes records purely for geezers like myself and the dreaded Tobler to con from whatever label J.J. happens to be working.

I mean, just one hit single — 'Mr. Bojangles', which claimed 77th spot in the US charts back in '68 — and that's the whole Walker saga of record success. In the past, his British sales have been so potent that often his albums haven't even been granted a release here.

But that's only half the story. Whatever Jerry Jeff's discs have lacked in sales-graph embellishing ability, they've usually atoned for by means of sheer good-hearted music.

For Walker's got a voice that is rough, abrasive and good-timey — fit only for a trucker's party. His phrasing hangs at will - he - or - won't - he - make - it level, J.J. sometimes desperately slurring in the last couple words in a line just before the band head past him.

And somehow in some crazy, totally illogical way, this works to his advantage. Given a fragile, sensitive love song like Garrard Merrick's 'Follow', he can, by his sheer earthiness, endow it with a warm, arm - round - shoulder affection, achieving this with an ease that would defeat many technically superior singers. And when he embarks on good-natured, brass-bound choogles such as John D. Loudermilk's 'Bad News', you can practically feel the Texas beer trickling down your throat.

So the voice is great, the songs — by Walker, Lee Clayton, Rodney Crowell and other superior tunesmiths — generally worthy of Jerry Jeff's attentions. And though The Bandito Band, who back Walker on this particular jamboree, maybe lack the good-natured feel of the Original Gonzo's they ably assist Jerry Jeff in his never-ending stagger down that lonesome, song-bedecked road.

Regretfully, maybe I'll prove right and this album won't sell. But it's the kind of record that once provided the Elektra label with a special kind of aura.

I'm sure Jac Holzman would give an approving nod.

Fred Dellar

THE MINCER

Man with Mouli: MAX BELL

DAVID SOUL
Moods ***(K-Tel)***

Fans of the Starsky and Hutch two hit wonder can thrill once again to David's interpretations of 'Don't Give Up On Us', 'Let's Have A Quiet Night In', 'Playing To An Audience Of One' (sic) and 'Seem To Miss So Much (Coal Miners Song)' (sick). The rest of us can only agree that David Soul is a lousy actor and an even worse singer.

VARIOUS
A Taste Of Tower ***(Capitol)***

Various artists are showcased on Capitol's Tower label taster. The label boasts such relatively uninteresting luminaries as Eddie Henderson, Charles Jackson and Peabo Bryson, none of whom are represented at their best. On the other foot you get reasonable selections from Freda Payne, Nancy Wilson and Natalie Cole, all of whom benefit from the limited time available. The record flits uneasily between high grade disco for masochists and diluted crossover jazz for narcissists. A well-intentioned but lousy sampler.

CATHERINE HOWE
Dragonfly Days ***(Ariola)***

A nauseating collection of simpering ballads with titles like 'Quietly And Softly' and 'God Help The Ones', assisted by a few name English sessioneers who must have been running for the bucket every other minute. Recommended for wets, weeds and soppy girls. Joan Armatrading this rubbish in for a quid down at Cheapos it ain't.

CHORALE
Chorale ***(Arista)***

Classical rock with the kitchen sink thrown in. Chorale make The Moody Blues sound like Mike Oldfield, what with the tubular bells, syndrums, string synths, etc. The kind of record they use to test out the speakers in audio shops.

GEORGE BENSON
Livin' Inside Your Love ***(Warner Brothers)***

George Benson says it all with his heartfelt liner note. To wit: "We appreciate the good things of today when we realise that they are part of dreams started yesterday. Recognising this helps us get a better hold on our own dreams and directions. Peace". Stick it, George old chap, and next time take your guitar with you.

MELANIE HARROLD
Blue Angel ***(DJM)***

Verbose, ill-constructed, tediously played torch ballads sung by a woman with a million stories to tell if you'll only bend an ear. Alas, my sweet, time is too short for this sort of tittle tattle — e'en now mein host in The Cumberland Arms is opening his doors and Monty Smith is setting up the first round.

MANDRILL
New Worlds ***(Arista)***

A fair summation of hybrid black music performed by a heavy looking bunch of dudes who make up in muscle what they lack in soul. The sounds veer from calypso through reggae to disco and Latin American. All seem contrived in spirit but they play with panache and steer clear of indulgences. Almost.

KENNY ROGERS
The Gambler ***(United Artists)***

I liked Kenny Rogers when he sang 'Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town', that song about the returning 'Nam veteran who lost his most vital part only to find his woman cheatin' on him. I don't like the current Rogers guise, duff C&W aided and abetted by Tony Joe White, Mickey Newbury, Bill 'Righteous Brother' Medley and The Jordan-aires. No big deal.

BOBBY BARE
Sleeper Wherever I Fall ***(CBS)***

True grit country with teeth and construction boots. Bare, who got to 'Four Strong Winds' long before Neil and was responsible for the classic 'That's How I Got To Memphis', scores heavily with this solid collection. Notable cuts are Dennis Linde's 'What Did It Get Me' and 'Feel A Whole Lot Better'. One of these rare instances when the excellence of the musicians is reflected in the talent they back.

RALPH McTELL
Slide Away The Screen ***(Warner Brothers)***

McTell updates a nondescript image by enlisting the British folk mafia (Pegg, Mattocks and the fine Richard Thompson). The songs are par for his course but the playing is merely pleasant. I guess it's time the guy got a break and, while this isn't my *tasse de the,* neither is it fair to hold the past against him.

PETER SARSTEDT
P.S. ***(Ariola)***

Sarstedt always was a prune. There's nothing here to match the sheer bad taste of 'Frozen Orange Juice' or 'Where Do You Go To My Lovely', but Pete's version of 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight' runs 'em pretty close.

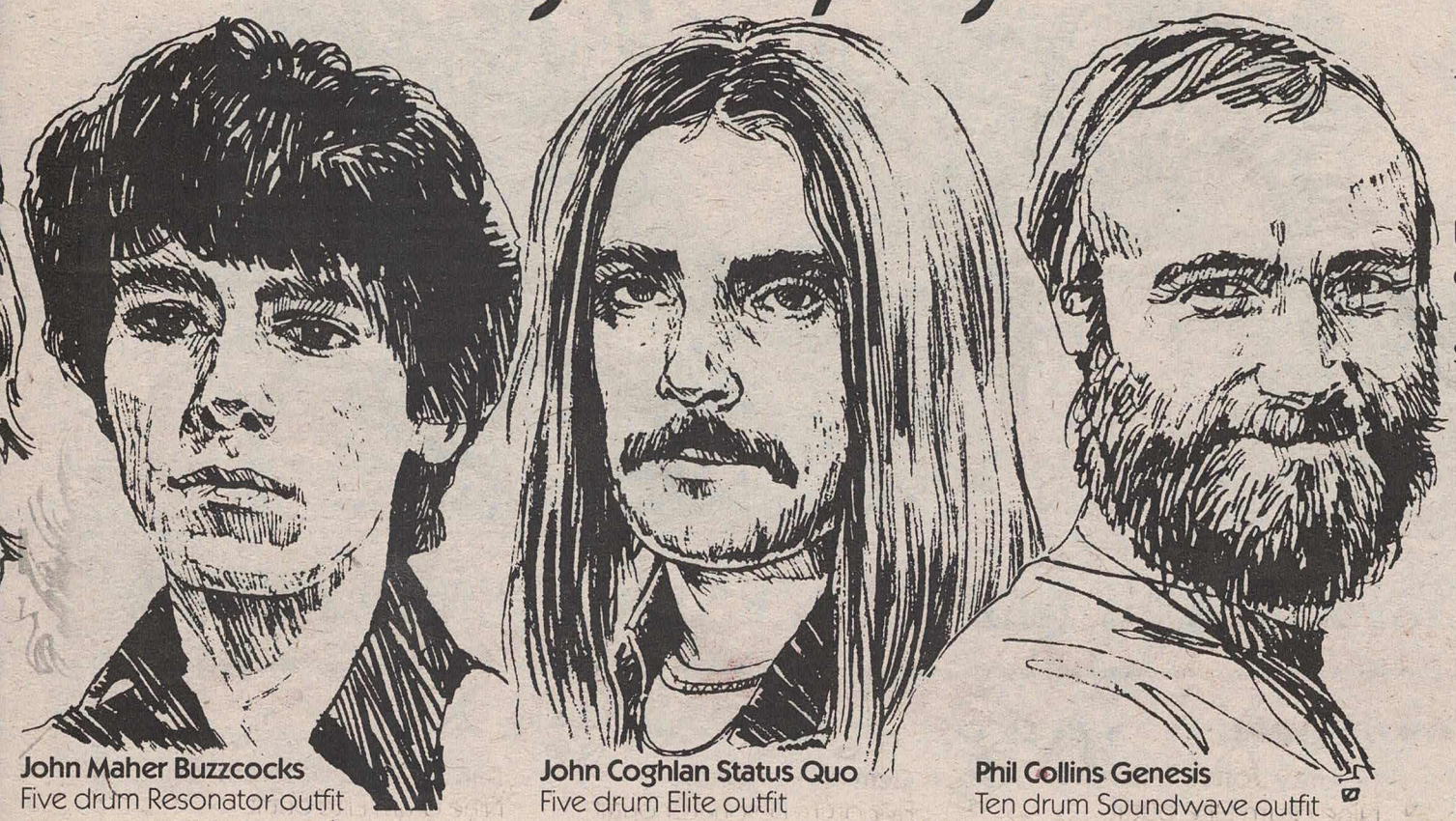
GILBERTO GIL
Nightingale ***(Elektra)***

Pan American culture shock as Brazil's impetuous inside right makes a dash for the charts with this tasty tortilla. The backing suggests that Gil hopes to accumulate thinking jazz fans as well as salsa initiates, and he might be right. The rhythm section — Alex Acuna and Abe Laboriel — is stunning throughout. Sergio Mendes is in attendance — ess posseeble you like thees, meester.

MARTIN BEST
Desdemonalisa ***(EMI)***

Precious but accurate delivery, fair welter of classical and folk rock influence, Maddy Prior and Rick Kemp. All in all the sort of record your mother would like you to like. Intelligent MOR for BBC producers to plug that gap with — expect to see Best on the Parkinson yawn-in.

Because they don't play like the other guys.



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THE ALLMAN BROTHERS · A NEW ALBUM · 'ENLIGHTENED ROGUES.'

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Looking to forward the sunset of my life

JAKE BLOOZEBRO: the gut is proportionate but the nose is all his own work.

MARK-ALMOND
Other People's Rooms
(Horizon)
DUNCAN BROWNE
The Wild Places
(Logo)

These records about the Good Life — mellow American and decadent English. The American one really lays back and murmurs away to itself good-naturedly; the English one preens and pretends and practises lean looks.

Mark and Almond (all I know about them is that their name is not respected — I think they may be old hippies gone cocktail instead of modern) are almost unbelievably uncomely, with a set of the bushiest whiskers you've ever seen each — yeuccchhh! Their accountant gets a strait-faced credit on the sleeve, written out of Carmel — if you please — California.

Still, I like it in a bland kind of way; I can really see myself saving it for my old age.

I wouldn't have liked it two years ago, what with all the movement, the youth and the great music, but I like it now. It's very monied, anonymous Los Angeles, the kind of quiet money that doesn't like to expose itself in mixed (rich and poor) company. It's courteous, but not piffling polite; the songs are from roughly the same class, the quieter the better, eight of them, called things like 'Girl On Table Four', 'Then I Have You' and 'You Look Just Like A Girl Again'.

I like it in the timeless haze I like Astrid Gilberto; a hot bathroom, a chiffon scarf across life, a rosy pill, silly '60s films which meant to be serious — you probably won't like it, but you won't be able to blame it for anything either.

Duncan Browne neither. Though his *forte* is to dilly, dally and prettify dissipation, he's much too fey and failure-type to corrupt anyone but the most low-cut choirboy. Bravely he has striven to construct a career around singing songs of the fates of the girls of the *demi-monde* — beautiful girls beyond drugs, done it all, shun it all, killing time. Soul-destroying.

These girls have been the basis of many a big man's career only since the early '70s — Roxy Music making the best money and memories out of it — and deserve some kind of recognition. To be one, you need (a) cheekbones that clearly identify you as coming from another planet; (b) to *be,* not *do,* for a living; and (c) — this is the clinch — know, personally, a pretentious pop singer.

Another phase, another laze . . . Duncan, the ants still active in his Raj-white pants, stands alone once more and makes a well-bred ass of himself. His songs — written between 1976 and 1978, digging up old stuff a sure sign of surrender — make token concessions to punk (with loaded references to leather and Japan). Would *you* want to go into the '80s with lines like *"One night as I walked out in Japan/I clung to the streets like a drowning man"* as your reference?

No, no, Duncan. Make a meal-ticket for yourself and put your popinjay shirt on the career of the colosses in the leopard leotard who creates the only imaginable point for buying your album — the beautiful cover-girl Mary Dobson (a more feline, accessible Jerry Hall).

At least take a tip from the girl and try to earn a living without opening your mouth.

Julie Burchill

BLUES BROTHERS
Briefcase Full Of Blues
(Atlantic)

Back in February, *NME's* very own blues brother waxed enthusiastic and informative in *Thrills* about this moderately fab platter, when it was hovering about the top of the American album charts. I should therefore only need to add that it's now released in Britain.

However, for the short-memoried among you, a recap:

Blues Brothers are John Joliet Jake Blues' Belushi (lead vocal) and Dan 'Elwood Blues' Aykroyd (harmonica, occasional vocal), two white yankee satirists who graduated from National Lampoon to star in the top-rated *Saturday Night Live* TV show, since when Belushi has also emerged as a major box-office anti-hero via his memorable role as the leading slob of *Animal House.*

Apparently, during the making of the film he belatedly discovered that blues and soul music is where it's at, man, and with the typical zeal of a newly-won convert, immediately set about recording album of same with his buddy and nine sympathetic musicians.

In the long and dodgy history of white men singing the blacks there have been many worse hams than Belushi but I doubt that anyone, least of all himself, would claim that he's a great vocalist. He has rasping power and steam-roller delivery in about equal proportions to the size of his gut but little range or flexibility.

It is the band, arrangers and engineers — including Steve Cropper and Matt Murphy on guitars, Duck Dunn on bass, a great little horn section, lead and arranged by Tom Malone, and several other 'names' whose pedigrees escape me off-hand, all deftly directed by keyboard player Paul Shaffer who are the real stars of the album.

Whether strutting through note-for-note recreations of the '60s Stax sound (as on the 'Can't Turn You Loose' intro-outro and 'Soul Man' track that was also a hit single), ably accompanying slow-rolling blues (notably 'Shot Gun Blues', featuring some splendid licks from Murphy) or rumping out the jump-blues tunes that make up the bulk of the set, these guys are as solid an r&b band as ever tonked a honk. No small thang when you consider they only all got together for this one-off project and that the whole thing was recorded live in an LA ampitheatre — which is why producer Bob Tischler and his engineers deserve a special mention.

Optimistic bods have been suggesting that the phenomenal success of the album in America may presage a resurgence of r&b-cum-soul music. I wouldn't have thought so myself, except that Monty 'The Man' Smith tells me that Belushi's next film is to be based on the Blues Brothers and will feature many authentic r&b stars.

With that kind of promotion, anything could happen.

Cliff White

THE OUTSIDERS
Close Up *(Raw Edge)*

With 'Close Up' The Outsiders — of whom, unfortunately, I know virtually nothing — have come up with a strictly 50/50 effort; a patchy, but promising, collection of love songs and almost astute social documentaries.

The love songs — mostly set to obvious, and unashamedly appealing fast music — are the best, dealing with the angst of broken romance and basically simple boy/girl relationships. The rest are a different kettle of fish entirely in the main, sprawling and strained attempts at biting (sic) social criticism, inadequately expressed over hopelessly self-conscious and half-hearted 'industrial' rhythms.

The best tracks are 'Vital Hours' and 'Out Of Place'. Both are classic examples of Big Beat Music — steadfastly optimistic riff, presented with maximum panache, underpinning a relatively obvious lyric delivered in a crisp and precise manner.

Adrian Borland sings with something of both Ray Davis and Jim Morrison in his voice — the latter influence painfully apparent on the heavy-handed 'Conspiracy Of War' — and plays guitar with a somewhat studied, psychedelic undertone that on occasion sounds elegant, but more often that not is just over expressive.

Jan (just Jan) is an unobtrusive drummer, who knows what to hit; how hard and when. Which leaves Bob Lawrence — for my money the star of the show — who plays wonderfully round-sounding bass lines that impress consistently.

A few reservations — but a band with a future.

John Hamblett

CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE
The Harmonica According To Charlie Musselwhite
(Kicking Mule)

A couple of years younger than Paul Butterfield, Charlie Musslewhite has a similar background — hanging out in black clubs, learning from the masters and ultimately earning their respect. Big Joe Williams rates him "right up there with Sonny Boy Williamson . . . he's been my harp player since Sonny Boy got killed."

Dedicated rather than ambitious, Musselwhite conceived this album as an illustration of his forthcoming book on blues harp techniques, but to these ears it sounds a barrel of fun for comb-and-paper merchants everywhere.

'Harpin' On A Riff' is the album's first and last party piece. A dazzling, 'top that' extravaganza in the spirit of Jeff Beck's 'I Ain't Superstitious' wah-wah orgy, it also happens to be a snappy, excellent jump blues. The rest are tough, creative performances sharing harp as featured instrument.

Beautifully produced by Kicking Mule co-founder Stefan Grossman, away from his acoustic stamping ground, Musslewhite's British band are superb, featuring veteran boogie pianist Bob Hall and a surefire, non-drag rhythm section in Steve York (bass) and Jeff Rich (drums). But it's guitarist Sam Mitchell who nearly steals the album.

Featured, but not credited, on R. Stewart's 'Gasoline Alley' and 'Every Picture', these days he gigs occasionally at Putney's Half Moon and makes specialist albums for Kicking Mule. Without soloing once, Mitchell excels throughout, kid glove delicate yet steely hard on the wailers.

Except for 'Azul Para Amparo', a camp-fire-in-old-Mexico number that would grace any Western, Musselwhite's tunes are superior blues fare. Two of the others started life as sax features, the harp singing like a cousin to the human voice on 'Tuff' and oozing Chaplinesque pathos on 'Hard Times', cradled by gently rocking wah-wah.

While no Butterfield, Musselwhite's rare vocals are far from inadequate. However, altering 'Pistol Slapper Blues' to 'Pistol In Your Face' and claiming it as your own is Page/Plant behaviour unworthy of both artist and label. Rapped knuckles all round.

But if, like me, you normally consider harp an optional extra, perpare to recant. Played with this degree of skill and imagination, the blues sounds like next year's thing.

Harry George

I once saw a football team that played a lot of possessive stuff, pretty and precise. When they moved upfield, they did so in methodical manner, each man in his place. In some ways it was impressive — but ultimately one yearned for just one touch of individual brilliance, something utterly unpremeditated, a move that just didn't come out of the textbook. And eventually that team blew the match — simply because the opposing side possessed a centre-forward who didn't know much about plans but simply had the know-how to dribble his way through a maze of legs and chip the ball over the keeper's head. *(Get on with it — Ed.)*

Novalis, a bunch of Hamburgers whose latest album is 'Vielleicht Bist Du Ein Clown' (Brain), somehow remind me of that team. They play safety-rock, offering a mite of this and a modicum of that.

If you're an ELP fan, you'll probably find something in there that'll remind you of Emerson's happy Hammond. If you've always astral-taxied along with Yes, it's possible that you too will find somewhere to hang your halo. Wishbone Ash? Yep, Novalis have Detlef Job and Fred Muhlbock dispensing some familiar twin-axe blendings. No one is forgotten and my guess is that the band are working to the best set of Kraut plans since Alfred von Schlieffen last slipped into top gear.

Imports

Everything is just so — the balance of instrumentals to songs, the effectiveness of each hook line on the latter, the neatly adjudged dynamics of each constructed solo. Everything comes with a tick on the checklist — even the sleeve being a calculated eyegrabber, courtesy of our old friends Hipgnosis. In fact, *the only thing that would be* seem to have been missed on the band's slightly dated blueprint is the lack of a vocalist who can sing in English — an essential for any German band seeking world domination.

But, despite it all (to quote a phrase), Novalis lose out simply because they take no chances and offer no surprises. They should try the musical equivalent of an overhead kick sometime — chances are it might work wonders.

The mention of wonders, reminds me that HMV are currently stocking the recent French reissues of such early **Little Stevie** albums as '12 Year Old Genius', 'Tribute To Uncle Ray', 'The Jazz Soul Of Little Stevie', 'With A Song In My Heart' and 'At The Beach' (all Motown).

Now Stevie Judkins wasn't the first American black kid to make it in Britain by a long chalk. In 1950 a 12 year old singer and pianist named Sugar Shile Robinson crashed into the British best-sellers (there were no charts!) with 'Christmas Boogie', following this with another hit in 'Numbers Boogie', plus a three week stay as headliner at the London Palladium.

But the multitude of talents displayed on 'Jazz Soul' — where the then 13 year-old Wonder plays organ, bongoes, piano, drums and harmonica on material partly penned by himself — amply demonstrates why he survived while others took the short cut to obscurity or, like Frankie Lymon, obtained their latest headlines in the saddest possible way.

Meanwhile, the 'Live At The Budokan' saga continues with two separate albums of that title emanating from the **Ian Gillan Band.** Vol. 1 (Island) includes live versions of such 'Clear Air Turbulence' material as the title track and 'Moneylender', Vol. 2 (Eastway) containing such Purple prose as 'Child In Time', 'Smoke On The Water' and 'Woman From Tokyo' — both albums being recorded at the same gig in September 1977.

Also available is a studio album titled merely 'Gillan' (Eastway), which — as far as I'm aware — is formed by a number of cuts that have never seen the light of day in Britain. All of which should send Gillan freaks into either ecstasy or poverty.

Probably the latter, for the price of these releases is not far short of ten quid a disc!

Fred Dellar

It soon come – fruit soon ripe – fi take we bite strength soon come – fi fling we might . . . . . .

ISLAND

words by Linton Kwesi Johnson from the Album 'Forces of Victory' Cat. No. ILPS 9566

LKJ

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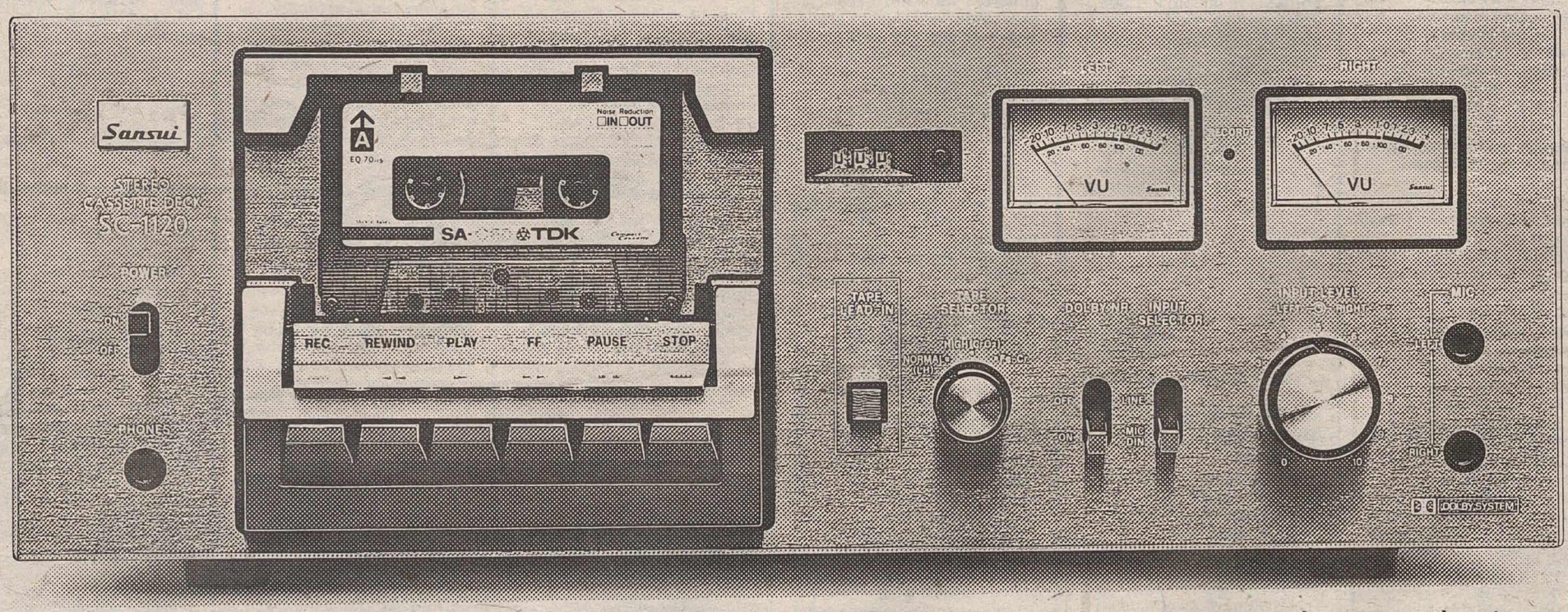
And selected models at branches of Comet.

What's an "A WHAM BAM BOOM" without "A WOP BOP A LOO BOP"!

And what use is a "Yeah, Yeah Yeah" when you haven't heard "She Loves You?" Not a lot. Professionals know this. That's why they never use the first few seconds of the tape. The surfaces are not uniform and this can cause dropouts and level fluctuations. Worse still if you record on the leader. An unfinished symphony is one thing but an unstarted one quite another. And no "A Wham Bam Boom" is complete without a "Wop Bop A Loo Bop" to start with.



Here comes the cavalry. Sansui are patenting an exclusive and unique tape lead-in device which is extremely simple to use and which guarantees that you'll never miss the opening bars of your recorded music. It's a cinch. You just press a button and after a second or so the tape stops precisely at the point where good recordings can begin. The Sansui stereo cassette deck SC 1120 is a masterpiece of aesthetic technology. An upright cassette makes for easy handling and maintenance, improves head-to-tape contact and makes the process of hi-fidelity recording extremely convenient.* That's enough from us. There are lots of Sansui dealers around. Go to one. Stop, look and listen. There are some sounds you should never miss.

*You will also find all these features in the 1100 G and 1110 cassette decks. In addition, the SC 1120 is designed to match the G 301 and G 401 receivers in both looks and sound compatibility.

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DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

Great...but then, I'm biased.

THE VERY HIGHEST OF FI....

....BY BERNARD FUTTER

Just SOME of the people who like up the idea of bias control on cassette decks.

IN TRUTH the Aiwa AD-6900K Dolby Cassette Deck should have been included in our cassette deck feature two months ago. However such is the formidable specification of this top-end unit that it would not have been possible to do it justice in the time available. Before we risk whetting appetites, it must be stated here and now that this unit is bloody expensive,

Around £400 is what you'll be asked to shell out.

For that kind of bread you could obtain a reel-to-reel deck with all its natural advantages.

As you would expect the AD-6900K is solidly constructed and has an operational feel that's in the Rolls Royce class. All transport controls engage with the merest touch — a welcome improvement on some of the stiff piano keys more usually on view. The AD-6900K employs a 3 head system, whereby the record and replay heads are separate, so that instantaneous monitoring of the sound and recorded sound is possible with an amp or receiver having that facility. One very valuable feature is that the meters incorporate two pointers. One, the more conventional VU type for the average level readings, and the other a peak indicator for sharp transients. It's possible to "lock" the peak indicator during a passage of music to maximum deflection. This is particularly valuable during complex passages when it's difficult to make sense of a wildly fluctuating needle. The limitations of the cassette medium mean that levels must be set with great care to obtain optimum replay performance and Aiwa's average and peak indicators will certainly help here.

But without question the most valuable attribute of the AD-6900K is variable biasing for each of the three bias switch positions. As we've stated before, some tapes give their best performances with certain tape decks only. This is because different formulations of tape require particular bias current levels. Since there can be considerable fluctuations between the settings on decks, matching can be very much a hit-and-miss affair. What the AD-6900K effectively ensures is that the optimum biasing value for any tape on the market can be readily determined. It's even possible to keep tabs on slight batch variations of the same brand! All that's necessary is to set the machine to "test" and record the two tone signals which are fed separately to the left and right meters. By adjusting the variable fine-bias control so that the reading on the right hand meter matches the left, the optimum bias level for that tape is achieved.

Another interesting feature is a switchable memory mechanism. This automatically rewinds the tape to the start of a pre-selected passage and either stops the machine or engages replay.

To run through some of the more "conventional" accoutrements of the AD-6900K, there's Dolby noise reduction, an unattended recording system (via a timer clock), a headphone socket and a cue function for easy track selection during high speed replay. Over many protracted listening sessions the AD-6900K gave an exceptionally good account of itself. As stated the three-head system enables instantaneous comparisons to be made between the original and the recorded sound and it was this that served to underline the real quality of this machine. In some cases it was very difficult to distinguish with any certainty which was which — an excellent performance for any cassette deck. It certainly renders all the old chestnuts about sound quality viz clarity and detail etc redundant.

In operation the touch controls were a delight to use and it was even possible to switch from one fast rewind mode straight into the other without the merest suggestion of a hiccup.

There we have it then: an outstanding machine incorporating the very desirable variable biasing feature. If you've got about £400 and you're looking for one of the best cassette decks on the market you owe it to yourself to check out the Aiwa AD-6900K.

HI FI CONNECTIONS

ONE OF the most persistent gripes about the acceptability of hi-fi in the home concerns the plethora of leads between units and power points that can resemble, even on a modest system, a transatlantic telephone cable.

Until recently this was less of a problem because amplifiers and receivers carried useful mains sockets at the back so that acillary equipment such as a tuner, record or tape deck could all be mains energised from a single source. However new electrical safety legislation (BS415) has prohibited the continued use of these outlets and the only solution has meant the use of bulky and potentially dangerous adapters.

A relatively new British firm, QED of Sunbury on Thames, have addressed themselves to this problem and have produced four- and six-socket mains distribution boxes. By

■ *Continues over page*

Ella Fitzgerald

Introducing Memorex MRX3 the brand new tape that's shattered me it gives higher highs and lower lows so more than ever no one knows is it MRX3, or is it meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

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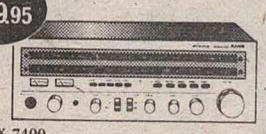

Aiwa AX-7400
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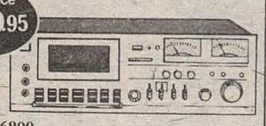

Aiwa AD6800
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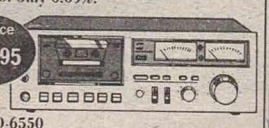

Aiwa AD-6550
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Aiwa TPR-905
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DON'T TOUCH DAT DIAL

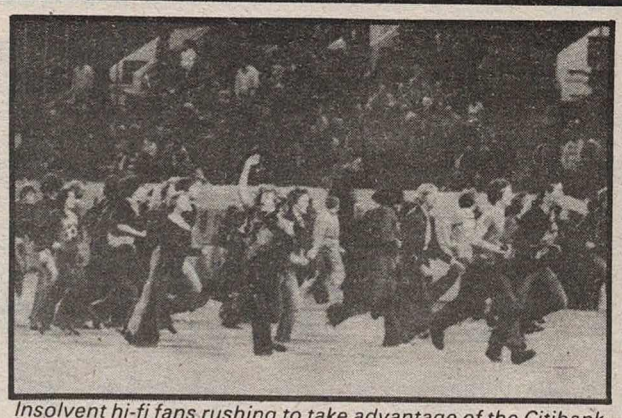
■ *From previous page*

utilising mini 3-pin plugs and sockets, the size of the six-socket box, is a mere 5⅛"×4"×2" deep. This means that it's compact enough to be hidden out of sight behind virtually any bit of audio hardware.

Both boxes are sturdily constructed and supplied with a generous 8 foot mains cable terminated in a standard 13 amp plug. In practice the mini plugs locked home in a very positive manner and should resist the odd accidental tug.

With a selling price of £9.45 (4 socket) and £12.52 (6 socket) and mini plugs 98p each I can wholeheartedly recommend these QED accessories as a reasonably-priced solution to one of hi-fi's perennial problems.

PIONEER ARE the manufacturers of some of the best value-for-money hi-fi in the world. However, the cost of assembling a complete system, even one from Pioneer, can be pretty daunting. So, in association with the Citibank Trust, Pioneer have recently introduced the Privilege Purchase Plan. When you've found a dealer operating the scheme, you can, after deducting the statutory 20% deposit, purchase Pioneer gear with an outstanding balance exceeding £200. The flat interest rate is a lavish 8%



Insolvent hi-fi fans rushing to take advantage of the Citibank credit plan.

which is equivalent to a true rate of 15.6% over 30 months. This is fixed and you can repay over 12, 18, 24 or 30 months. It's also cheaper than the current Barclaycard and Access rates. Providing you are creditworthy clearance can be arranged pretty swiftly..

Sounds worth an investigation if your liquidity does not quite match your ambitions.

Aiwa AD-6900K
Selling Price £400.

Details from: Aiwa Sales & Service, 30 Concord Road, London W3.

QED 9/2 Mains Unit (6 plug).
Selling Price £18 inc. plugs.
Details from: QED Audio Products,
112 Windmill Road,
Sunbury-on-Thames, MX.

Pioneer Privilege Purchase Plan.
Details from:
Pioneer House, The Ridgeway, Iver, Bucks.

THE FALL

■ *From page 8*

women in the band, so we never got into that. A lot of groups have definitely got into rebelling on that silly piss artist level."

Mark: "Which is just what the Stones did in the '60s — terrorise a few people 'n' pretend you're shaking things up a bit."

It's impossible to end with any kind of definitive statement on The Fall's position, simply because they appear to be such an amorphous conglomeration of diverse influences and bits of ideas. Ian Penman's feature criticised them for having "no purpose" and it's a telling point.

The Fall have no clarity, no precise goals. They want the music to "progress" though they don't know how. They want to continue "on their own terms" though they can't really define them. They *are* distressingly vague, and their inability to articulate their aims is limiting and possibly self-defeating.

For all their martial language and stirring talk of the 'rock'n'roll dream', The Fall seem to be fighting battles that have got to be refought every day and can never be won. They're at war simply to stay how and where they are.

Maybe they named themselves after the wrong Camus book. Maybe they should have called themselves The Myth Of Sisyphus.

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Monday Apri 9th £1.00
THE PRESS
+ The Ruts

Tuesday April 10th £1.00
Commercial Rock Night with
NANCY KRAMER
+ Cliche

Wednesday April 11th £1.00
Last British Appearance Prior to U.S.A. Tour
SPLIT RIVITT
+ Physicals

Wednesday April 25th
IGGY POP
+ THE ZONES
Advance tickets £3.00 from Box Office

LICENSED BARS — LIVE MUSIC — DANCING
8PM — 2 AM MONDAY TO SATURDAY
OVER 18s ONLY

PEGASUS

109 GREEN LANES, N.16

Thursday April 5th 50p
CROOKS
+ Clockwork Toys (ex-Doll)
Friday April 6th 50p
DOGWATCH
Saturday April 7th 75p
BIG CHIEF
featuring Dick Heckstall-Smith
Sunday April 8th 50p
THE BOOKS
Monday April 9th free
STEVE ELGIN & THE FLATBACKERS
+ Charlie Bravo
Tuesday April 10th
SCANDAL
+ The Resistance
Wednesday April 11th free
THE SHOTS
+ Spare Parts

DUKE OF LANCASTER

Approach Road, NEW BARNET (beside BR New Barnet)

Thursday April 5th
TERRY VISION & THE SCREENS
Friday April 6th
RAM
Saturday April 7th
JOHN GRIMALDI'S CHEAP FLIGHTS
Sunday April 8th
BILLY RANKIN & FRIENDS
Tuesday April 10th
SUCKER

THE NASHVILLE ROOM

FULLERS TRADITIONAL ALES

Thursday April 5th 75p
LITTLE ACRE + Mat Stagger
Friday April 6th £1
CRAZY CAVAN & THE RHYTHM ROCKERS + The Stickers
Saturday April 7th £1
WHIRLWIND + Beast
Sunday April 8th 75p
THE SPORTS + Killermeters
Monday April 9th Free
INTERVIEW + Trimmer & Jenkins
Tuesday April 10th 75p
LEW LEWIS' REFORMER + The Crooks
Thursday April 12th £1.50
THE POLICE + Famous Players

CORNER CROMWELL ROAD/NORTH END ROAD, W14
Adjacent West Kensington Tube Tel: 01-603 6071)

ROCK WITH THE
CAROLINE
Roadshow

APRIL
Thur 5 FOLKESTONE, Leas Cliff Hall, with support ****LYNX****
Fri 6 CHELMSFORD, Chancellor Hall, Market Road
Fri 6 IPSWICH, Suffolk College, Rope Walk with support "CANNED ROCK"
Thur 12 MAIDSTONE, Corn Exchange
Sat 14 BISHOPS STORTFORD, Rhodes Centre
Thur 19 BASILDON, Raquels
Fri 20 COLCHESTER, Woods Sports Centre, Bergholt Road
Sat 21 STOWMARKET, Mid-Suffolk Sports Centre
Thur 26 BARKING F.C., Lodge Avenue, Barking
Fri 27 DUNSTABLE, Queensway Hall, Bernem Place
Mon 30 BRENTWOOD, Hermit Club

Sat 7 LONDON GREYHOUND, FULHAM PALACE ROAD
A coach will run from Chelmsford. Tickets available at all roadshows and from the Hermit Club, Brentwood.

CAROLINE ROADSHOW ROCK CONCERT IPSWICH GAUMONT
Saturday April 28th 1979. Admission £2 with LIAR
★ *Lightshows supplied by Pulsar, Pluto, F.A.L., Zero 88 and Light Sound Studios. Lasers by Torial Electrical.*

THE Venue
160 VICTORIA ST, SW1
(opp Victoria Tube station)
01-834 5500
Doors open 6pm

Friday April 6th £3.00
PERCY SLEDGE
9.00

Saturday April 7th £3.00
KOKOMO
7 thru 'til 3

Monday April 9th
& Tuesday April 10th
(just back from Europe)
STEVE HILLAGE
£3.00 (incl free meal)
9.00

Wednesday April 11th £3.00
LONNIE DONEGAN
8.30 & 12

Thursday April 12th £3.75
PATTI LABELLE
8.30 & 12

Friday April 13th £3.00
JIMMY JAMES & THE VAGABONDS
9.00

A.J.'s Club
High Street, Lincoln
Tel: 30874

Live Music every Friday
Friday 6th April at 8pm
Top Recording Stars
SASSAFRAS

BEAST

Thursday 5th April
SWAN, HAMMERSMITH

Saturday 7th April
NASHVILLE

dog watch

Thursday 5 April
Filming and live recording at
CANNING TOWN, Bridge House
Friday 6 April
STOKE Newington, Pegasus
Sunday 8 April
EAST HAM, Ruskin Arms
Monday 9 April
MILTON KEYNES, Crawford Hotel
Tuesday 10 April
HARROW ROAD, Windsor Castle
Wednesday 11 April
STEVENAGE, The Swan
Friday 13 April
BASILDON, Double Six
Saturday 14 April
NEW BARNET, Duke of Lancaster
Sound Scene Agency
01-261 9741/9774

ART FAILURE
IN BRITAIN

PAUL KING for OUTLAW CONCERTS presents

MANU DIBANGO

HAMMERSMITH ODEON
SATURDAY 7th APRIL 8.00pm

Tickets: £3.00 £2.50 £2.00
from Box Office and usual Agents

S.W.1

Fridays April 6th and 13th
WESTERN COUNTIES
PADDINGTON

Tuesday April 10th
WINDSOR CASTLE
HARROW ROAD

Ring: Nassar — 01-451 2377
Peter — 01-828 9419

CHANCELLOR HALL, CHELMSFORD
Sunday, April 8th at 8 pm

THE ENID
+ Support

Tickets £1.50 in advance
Enquiries: Chelmsford (0245) 54964

words words (Barry Clarke) words words words words words

CITY HALL, ST. ALBANS
Saturday, April 14th at 8 pm
JOHN MILES
+ Bandit
Mary Jane Disco : Bar : Food
Tickets £1.50
All tickets from Box Office, 37 Chequer Street, St. Albans.
Tel 64511 or available on door.

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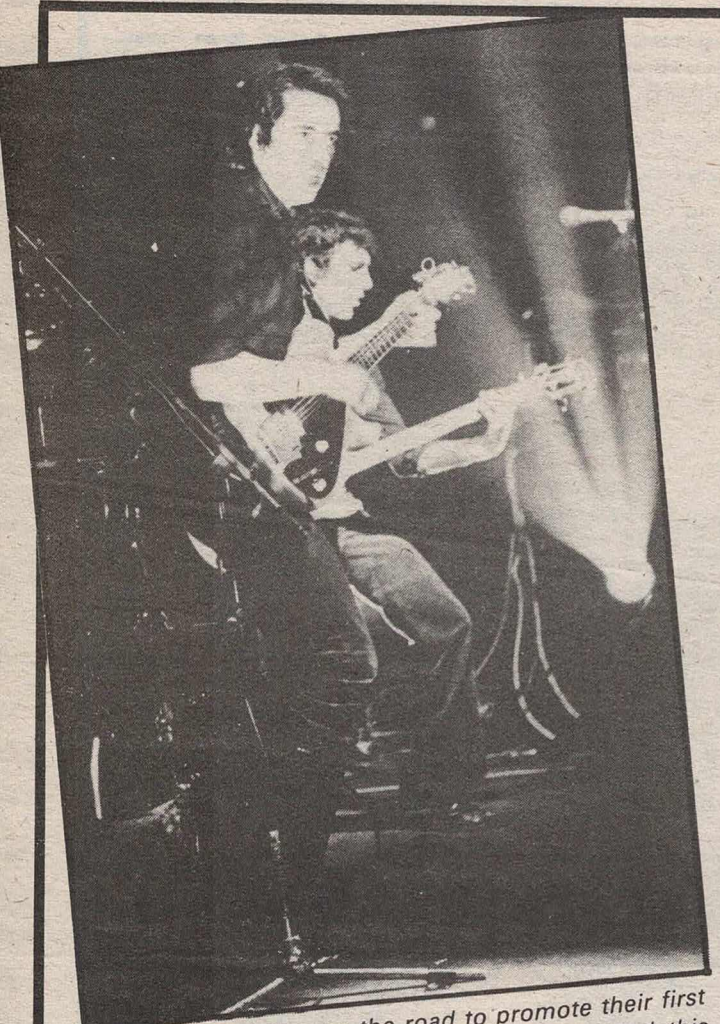
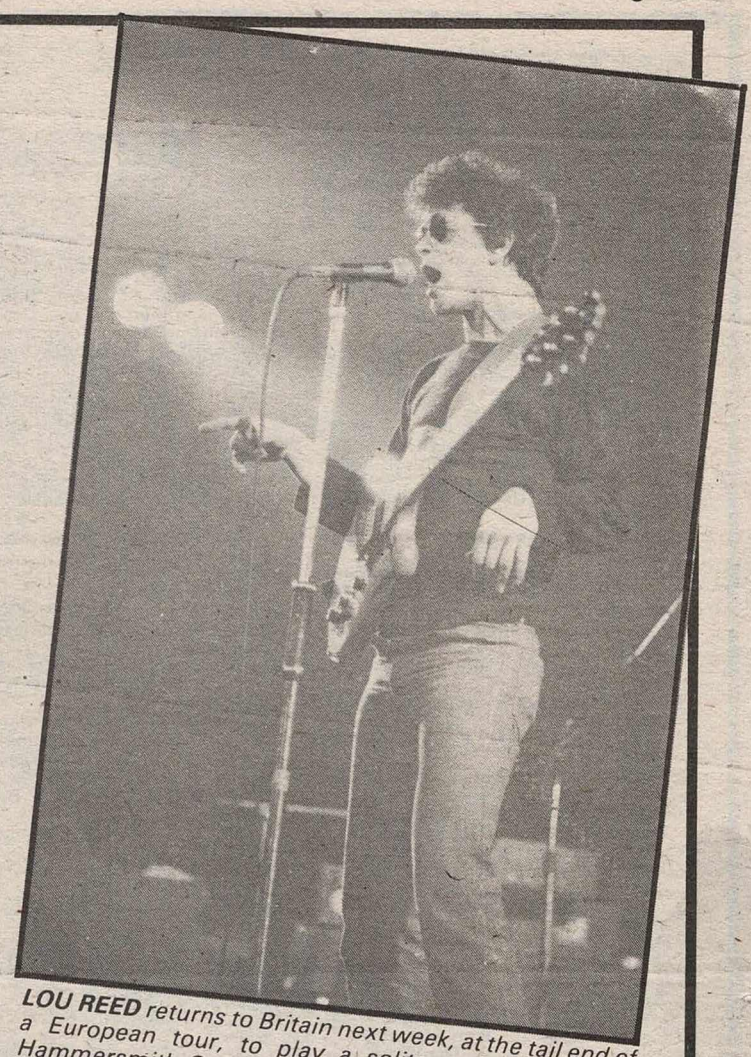


DOLL BY DOLL are on the road to promote their first album 'Remember' on Automatic Records, and this week finds them at Leeds (Thursday), Burton (Friday), Nottingham (Saturday), Norwich (Sunday), York (Monday) and London (Tuesday).

SIOUXSIE & The Banshees are back in action on Saturday, but only for a special one-off charity concert at London Rainbow in aid of the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children. Supports are The Human League and Rema Rema.



LOU REED returns to Britain next week, at the tail end of a European tour, to play a solitary gig at London Hammersmith Odeon on Tuesday. He'll be previewing his new album 'Bells' (released April 20), and the gig's already sold out!

NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

POSTAL DELAYS **If you've sent us gig details for publication, and you find they've not been included, it's probably due to industrial action by Post Office workers which has been delaying mail deliveries in London. Sorry about that — but, on this occasion, we are blameless!**

Thursday

Ampthill Folk Club: **Jenny Titmus**
Birmingham Aston University: **The Resistance/The Stickers**
Birmingham Hippodrome: **Kate Bush**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Special Clinic**
Birmingham Mr. Sam's: **Wide Boys**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Orphan**
Birmingham The Bell: **The Clerks**
Birmingham The Haven: **Reno**
Bradford E-Stile Club: **Sten**
Bradford St George's Hall: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Bristol Crockers: **Eyes**
Burntwood Troubadour: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Chesterfield Fusion Top Rank: **The Cure**
Cornforth United Social Club: **Vesuvius**
Crewe Alsager College: **Bram Tchaikovsky**
Dartford Flicks: **Light Of The World**
Dumfries Technical College: **Simple Minds**
Eastleigh Crown Hotel: **Thieves Like Us**
Feltham Football Club: **Matchbox**
Gravesend Red Lion: **Stunshot**
Great Yarmouth Star & Garter: **The Damned**
Halifax Civic Theatre: **Roger Whittaker**
Harrow The Havelock: **The Chevrons**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **Warm Jets**
Hucknall Miners Welfare Club: **Limelight**
Kendal Brewery Arts Centre: **Al Grey**
Leeds City Varieties: **Billy Connolly**
Leeds Fan Club: **Doll By Doll/Art Failure**
Leeds Fforde Green Hotel: **The Vye**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Fumin**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Thin Lizzy**
Liverpool Empire Theatre: **Motorhead-/Girls School**
Liverpool Eric's: **Ded Byrds**
London Action Space: **The Red Crayola/Laura Logic/Scritti Polotti**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Soul Yard**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Dog Watch**
London Chiswick John Bull: **Blitzkrieg**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Big Deal**
London Deptford Albany Empire: **The Psychedelic Furs**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Elton John**
London Epping Folk Club: **Mary Asquith**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Noel McCalla Band**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **Beast**
London Harrow Road Windsor Castle: **Lew Lewis Reformer/Rubber Johnny**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Nicky & The Dots**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Manyana**
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Little Acre/Matt Stagger**
London Knightsbridge Pizza on the Park: **Martin Taylor/Ike Isaacs**
London Marquee Club: **Zaine Griff**
London Maunkberry's: **Lizzie**
London Paddington Western Counties: **The Flexible Dustbins**
London Palladium: **Gloria Gaynor & Her Experience**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Johnny Parker-Colin Smith Quartet**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **The Shades**
London St Moriz Club: **Red Tape**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The Crooks/Clockwork Toys**
London Tottenham The Spurs: **Zilch**
London Waterloo National Theatre Foyer: **Bob Davenport/The Rakes**
Macclesfield Krumbles: **Lies All Lies**
Manchester Russell Club: **Exodus**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **Chaser**
Middlesbrough Town Hall: **John Miles-/Bandit**
Newcastle Quayside Red House: **American Echoes**
Norton Caines Dog Track Rock Club: **Ocean Boulevard**
Norwich Boogie House: **Boy Bastin**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Hormones**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Lap Region**
Portsmouth Victory Club: **Billy Ocean**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Reynardine/Pat Ryan**
Reading Cap & Gown: **Richard Digance**
Reading Three Tuns: **El Seven**
Redruth London Inn: **Lipservice**
Shrewsbury Music Hall: **Ralph McTell**
Slough Fulcrum Centre: **The Spinners**
Southampton Guildhall: **Tom Robinson Band/The Straits**
Southampton Joiners Arms: **Interference**
Southend Scamps: **Steve Hooker Band**
Swansea Hafod Inn: **The Hoggs**
Willenhall The Cavalcade: **Ocean Boulevard**
Winsford Knight Grange Barn: **The Fall**
Wisbech Isle Ely Technical College: **Wild Horses**
York The Revolution: **The Accelerators/The Void**

Friday

Bagshot Pantiles Club: **Light Of The World**
Betchworth Red Lion: **Richard Digance**
Bicester Nowhere Club: **Stunshot**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Bright Eyes**
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **Bad Earth**
Birmingham (Small Heath) The Sydenham: **The Crack**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Shader**
Blackpool Welcome Inn: **Mistress**
Bodmin Garland Ox: **Joe Heaney**
Bradford University: **The Resistance/The Blanks**
Braintree Technical College: **Deep Throats**
Brighton Bombay Bar: **Devil's Dykes/The Parrots/Woody and The Splinters**
Brighton Top Rank: **Manu Dibango**
Bristol Crockers: **Eyes**
Bristol Turntable Club: **Lipservice**
Burton 76 Club: **Doll By Doll**
Cardiff University: **U.K. Subs/The Skunks**
Carterton M.S. Society: **Armpit Jug Band**
Chiddingly Six Bells: **The Dials**
Cleethorpes Queens Hotel: **Chain Of Dots**
Coventry Ryton Bridge Hotel: **Streetlite**
Derby College of Education: **Capital Letters/Neon Hearts**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **Gotham City Swing Band**
Eastbourne The Cavalier: **Shakedown**
Edinburgh Odeon: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Etchingham Arms: **John Thomas**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **John Miles-/Bandit**
Guildford Civic Hall: **Tom Robinson Band/The Straits**
Halifax Shay Club: **Al Grey**
Hanley Victoria Hall: **Roger Whittaker**
Harlow Playhouse: **Telephone Bill and The Smooth Operators/Adrian May**
Hemsworth United Services Club: **Limelight**
Horwich Crown Hotel: **J.G. Spoils**
Inverness Aviemore Centre: **Showaddywaddy**
Kettering Windmill Club: **The Bearshank Band**
Kirkcaldy Birksgate: **The Buzzards**
Kirklevington Country Club: **The Vye**
Leeds Fforde Green Hotel: **Simple Minds**
Leeds Polytechnic: **The Jerks/The Toys**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **The Alwoodley Jets**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Leicester Westmead Club: **Matchbox**
Liverpool Empire Theatre: **Billy Connolly**
Liverpool Eric's: **Prince Far I/Bim Sherman/Prince Hammer/Creaton Rebel**
London Acton Kings Head: **Paz**
London Archway Tavern: **The Passions**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Fischer-Z/Red Alert**
London Camden Dublin Castle: **ABC**
London Camden Music Machine: **The Young Bucks/Teen Beats**
London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Warm Jets**
London Covent Garden Rock Gardens: **The Vipers**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Elton John**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Scandal**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Immigrant/X-Films**
London Islington Hope and Anchor: **The Molesters**
London Marquee Club: **The Psychedelic Furs**
London Notting Hill Old Swan: **Fast Livin'**
London N.W.1 Musicians Collective: **The Inevitable**
London Palladium: **Gloria Gaynor and Her Experience**
London Putney Star and Garter: **Greig and Nigel's Folk and Blues Night**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Beryl Bryden/Rod Mason Band**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Dog Watch**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Bridge Connection**
London Victoria The Venue: **Percy Sledge**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Eddie and The Hot Rods**
Manchester (Stalybridge) Commercial Hotel: **Any Trouble**
Matlock Baths Pavilion: **Mean Street Dealers**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **Mouth and Trousers**
Newport The Village: **The Gang Of Four**
Nottingham Club Malibu: **The Angelic Upstarts/Aswad/Crisis/Slip Hazard and The Blizzards**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Last Call**
Oxford New Theatre: **Kate Bush**
Oxford Oranges and Lemons: **English Subtitles**
Oxford The Chequers: **Spitfire**
Portsmouth Guildhall: **Thin Lizzy**
Preston Guildhall: **David Essex**
Reading Caribbean Club: **Disturbance/The Duncans**
Retford Porterhouse: **The Damned/The Void**
Ringwood Elm Tree: **Thieves Like Us**
Scarborough Penthouse: **Wild Horses**
Sheffield Limit Club: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **The Spinners**
Southend Top Alex: **The Purple Hearts/Low Numbers/Tenpole Tudor**
St Albans City Hall: **Ralph McTell**
Sunderland Mecca Centre: **Co-Star**
Tamworth The Chequers: **Ocean Boulevard**
Uxbridge Unit One: **The Bombers**
Thornley Working Men's Club: **Vesuvius**
Watford College: **The Cure**
Weaverham The Salters: **Lies All Lies**
Wolverhampton Lafayette: **Supercharge**
York The Revolution: **Pressure Shocks**

Saturday

Aberdeen Capitol Theatre: **John Miles-/Bandit**
Abertillery Six Bells: **Snoots**
Ascott-under- Wychwood Tiddy Hall: **Spredthick**
Barkingside Old Maypole: **Matchbox**
Basingstoke St Magnum's: **Thieves Like Us**
Birmingham Barbarella's: **Grand Hotel**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Reno**
Birmingham Bogarts: **Berlin**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Wide Boys**
Birmingham Hippodrome: **Billy Connolly**
Birmingham (Kings Heath) Hare & Hounds: **Cocky**
Birmingham Odeon: **Motorhead/Girls School**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **School Sports**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Topaz**
Blackburn Wesley Hall: **The Activators**
Blackpool Welcome Inn: **Mistress**
Bournmouth Winter Gardens: **Thin Lizzy**
Bristol Crown Cellar Bar: **The Wild Beasts**
Bristol Dockland Settlement: **Juan Foote 'n' The Grave**
Burton The Galaxy: **Mean Street Dealers**
Cambridge The Alma: **Hopo**
Cardiff Sophia Gardens: **The Angelic Upstarts/Aswad/Crisis**
Carshalton St Helier Arms: **Vernon & The G.I.'s**
Cheltenham Plough Hotel: **Hardware/Purple Hearts/Clinix**
Cheltenham Whitcombe Lodge: **Prince Far I / Bim Sherman / Prince Hammer**
Chester Arts Centre: **The Young Bucks**
Colchester (Copford) The Windmill: **Billy Ocean**
Cuckfield Kings Head: **Shakedown**
Doncaster (Bircotes) Harworth Welfare Club: **The Accelerators**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Eastbourne Sundowner Club: **Speed Limit**
Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre: **Max Boyce/Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators**
Farnborough Recreation Centre: **The Spinners**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Halifax Good Mood Club: **The Special A.K.A.**
Hastings Carlisle Tavern: **Minotaur**
Kinghorn Cuinzie Neuk: **The Buzzards**
Leeds Haddon Hall: **The Vye**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Lies All Lies**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Howard Ellis Band**
Liverpool Empire Theatre: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Liverpool Royal Court Theatre: **David Essex**
London Bloomsbury Bull & Mouth: **Joe Heaney/Ewan MacColl & Peggy Seeger**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Panties-/Melody Force**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Ramrod**
London Chiswick Keep Rock Club: **Scandal**
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Inmates/The Cannibals**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Cruisers**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Elton John**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Manu Dibango**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **London Zoo**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **V.1/The Reptiles**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Beast**
London Lewisham Odeon: **Tom Robinson Band/The Straits**
London Marquee Club: **Angletrax**
London Paddington Western Counties: **Too Much**
London Palladium: **Gloria Gaynor & Her Experience**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Siouxsie & The Banshees/The Human League/Rema Rema**
London Regents Park Cecil Sharp House: **Chris Rohmann**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Don Harper-Denny Wright Quartet**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Big Chief**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Bridge Connection**
London Victoria The Venue: **Commander Cody**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Press/Purple Hearts**
Manchester Ashton Spread Eagle: **Zanathus**
Manchester The Factory: **The Damned/The Ruts**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **Mouth & Trousers**
Norwich St Andrews Hall: **Ralph McTell**
Norwich Whites: **Gypp**
Nottingham Boat Club: **Nutz**
Nottingham Club Malibou: **Bram Tchaikovsky**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Outward Band**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **Dol By Doll**
Oxford College of Further Education: **The Only Ones**
Oxford Oranges & Lemons: **Quasar**
Reading Target Club: **Double Xposure**
Rochdale Technical College: **Steroid Kiddies**
Royston Meldreth Manor School: **George Melly & The Feetwarmers**
Runcorn Cherry Tree Hotel: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers**
Seahouses The Dolphin: **Co-Star**
Sheffield Tinsley Club: **Strange Days**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Kate Bush**
St Albans Horn of Plenty: **Zilch**
Sunderland The Old 29: **Vesuvius**
Taunton Fagin's Kitchen: **Interference**
Walsall Pelsall Community Centre: **Drowsy Maggie/Bill Caddick**
Wellingborough The Cromwell: **Isaws**
West Bromwich Coach & Horses: **Ocean Boulevard**
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): **The Pests**
York The Revolution: **Neon Hearts**

Sunday

Birmingham Shirley Red Lion: **The Crack**
Birmingham Town Hall: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Tracks (lunchtime)/Jobida (evening)**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Piranhas**
Bristol Colston Hall: **Thin Lizzy**
Bristol Hippodrome: **Billy Connolly**
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott & Ian Ellis**
Cambridge Guildhall: **Ralph McTell**
Cardiff New Theatre: **The Spinners**
Cheltenham New Victory Club: **Tundra**
Coventry The Pilot: **Ocean Boulevard**
Derby Old Bell Hotel: **Strange Days**
Glasgow Saints & Sinners: **Underhand Jones**

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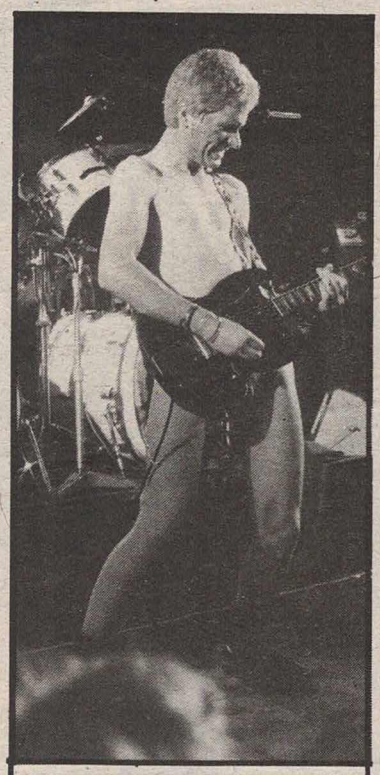
Huddersfield Amsterdam Bar: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers (for a week)**
Jacksdale Grey Topper: **Grand Hotel**
Leeds Grand Theatre: **David Essex**
Leeds Victoria Hotel (lunchtime): **Best Friends**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Juggernaut**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Motorhead-/Girls School**
Llanelli Glen Ballroom: **Rock Against Racism 'Militant Entertainment' Tour**
London Action King's Head: **Strange Fruit**
London Battersea Nags Head: **Jugular Vein**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Blast Furnace & The Legal Matter**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Remus Down Boulevard**
London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: **The Invisibles (for four days)**
London Charing-X Rd. Astoria Theatre: **"Oh Boy!" with Alvin Stardust/Joe Brown/Les Gray/Shakin' Stevens/Freddie 'Fingers' Lee etc.**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Skin Deep**
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: **Dog Watch**
London Finchley Torrington: **The Inmates**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The Soul Boys**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Vipers**
London Marque Club: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
London Peckham Montpelier (lunchtime): **Blue Moon**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Monty Worlock**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The Books**
London Strand Lyceum Ballroom: **The Damned/U.K. Subs/The Specials**
London Tooting The Castle: **Zilch**
London Victoria The Venue: **Commander Cody**
London Wealdstone Queens Arms: **The Injections**
London W.1 Portman Hotel: **Beryl Bryden-/Rod Mason Band**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Dusty Springfield**
Newbridge Memorial Hall: **Simple Minds**
Newcastle City Hall: **John Miles/Bandit**
Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
Norwich Boogie House: **Doll By Doll**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Medium Medium**
Oldham Birch Hall Hotel: **Al Grey**
Portsmouth Centre Hotel: **Richard Digance**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Brian Dewhurst/Barry & Peter/Bedlam**
Preston Guildhall: **Roger Whittaker**
Redcar Coatham Bowl: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Sheffield Wordsworth Tavern: **Neil Fryer's Cotton Crushes**
Stalybridge Commercial Hotel: **Zanathus**
Stratford-on-Avon Ettington Park: **Orphan**
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Watford Mex's Palace: **The Notion/Crush Biston Band**
Wollaston Nags Head: **Atlas**
Wolverhampton Civic Hall: **Tom Robinson Band/The Straits**

Monday

Birkenhead Hamilton Club: **Frankie Miller's Full House/The Flicks**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Fashion**
Birmingham Crown & Cushion: **Ocean Boulevard**
Birmingham Drakes Drum: **Streetlite**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Orphan**
Birmingham Odeon: **Dusty Springfield**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Video**
Birmingham Town Hall: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Brighton Alhambra: **Dirty Weekend/The Return**
Brighton Dome: **Elton John**
Bristol Colston Hall: **Thin Lizzy**
Bristol Hippodrome: **Kate Bush**
Bristol Locarno: **Glaxo Babies**
Cardiff New Theatre: **Max Boyce/Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators (for a week)**
Chester Smartyz: **The Damned/Amsterdam**
Croydon The Cartoon; **John Thomas**
Hanley Victoria Hall: **Motorhead/Girls School**
Hull Romeo & Juliet: **Supagrass/The Void**
Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Plus Support**
Liverpool's Eric's: **Supercharge**
Liverpool The Crown: **The Clerks**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Double Xposure/The Q.T.'s/Tot & The Girls In Room 419**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Wild Kats**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Stan's Blues Band**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Billy Connolly**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Cuddly Toys**
London Ilford Odeon: **Tom Robinson Band/The Straits**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Interview**
London Marquee Club: **Purple Hearts**
London Old Brompton Rd. Troubadour: **Tom & Lynne**
London Putney Half Moon: **John Kirkpatrick & Sue Harris**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Steve Elgin & The Flatbackers/Charlie Bravo**
London University College: **The Monos**
London Victoria The Venue: **Steve Hillage**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Crass/The Boys & Girls**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **John Miles-/Bandit**
Newcastle Jazz NorthEast: **Al Grey**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Party**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwaihir**
Saltcoats Banks & Braes: **Underhand Jones**

GIG GUIDE CONTINUED



***THE DAMNED** whose Captain Sensible is pictured above, have a major London concert on Sunday. Other tour dates this week: Gt Yarmouth (Thursday), Retford (Friday), Manchester (Saturday), Chester (Monday), Birmingham (Tuesday) and Torquay (Wednesday).*

Witney Folk Club: **Tundra**
Wolverhampton Lafayette: **Sigma**
York Pop Club: **Doll By Doll**

Tuesday

Birmingham Barbarella's: **The Damned /The Ruts**
Birmingham Crown & Cushion: **The Kidda Band / Streetlite**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Brujo**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Killer**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Speed Limit**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Gypp**
Blackburn King George's Hall: **John Miles / Bandit**
Bradford St George's Hall: **Roger Whittaker**
Brecon Nythfa Country Club: **Tundra**
Brighton Alhambra: **Fan Club**
Brighton Dome: **Elton John**
Bristol Colston Hall: **Motorhead / Girls School**
Cleethorpes Winter Gardens: **Frankie Miller's Full House / The Flicks**
Croydon Fairfield Hall: **Stephane Grappelli / Diz Disley Trio**
Edinburgh The Platform: **Al Grey**
Edinburgh Usher Hall: **Dusty Springfield**
Glasgow Dial Inn: **Underhand Jones**
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: **Tom Robinson Band / The Straits**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **3C295**
Liverpool (Huyton) Bluebell Inn: **Amsterdam**
Liverpool Mr Pickwick's: **Nik Turner's Sphynx / Geisha Girls**
Liverpool Oscar's: **Wild Horses**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Sports**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **The Press**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Brockley Boogie Band**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Billy Connolly**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Lou Reed**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **SW1**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Lew Lewis Reformer / Purple Hearts**
London Marquee Club: **Doll By Doll**
London Maunkberry's: **Viola Wills**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Tony Lee Quartet**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Scandal / The Resisters**
London Victoria The Venue: **Steve Hillage**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Necromats / The Molesters**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Kate Bush**
Manchester Band On The Wall: **58th Variety / The Thing / Red**
Plymouth Woods Centre: **Rock Against Racism (Militant Entertainment' Tour**
Preston Guildhall: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Rayleigh Crocs: **Crazy Cavan & The Rhythm Rockers**
Sheffield Limit Club: **Eyes**
Stafford Bingley Hall: **Thin Lizzy**
Walsall Dirty Duck: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Wokingham King of Clubs: **Light Of The World**

Wednesday

Altringham Bowden Vale Club: **Ed Banger/Zanathus**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Brujo**
Birmingham Bogarts: **Brooklyn**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Rainmaker**
Birmingham The Haven: **Mean Street Dealers**
Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: **Roses**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **F.U.X.**
Bristol Colston Hall: **John Miles/Bandit**
Burton Royalls Theatre Club: **Freddie Cole (for four days)**
Bury Derby Hall: **George Melly & The Feetwarmers**
Carshalton St Helier Arms: **The Riot Rockers**
Cheltenham Plough Inn: **Roadsters**
Chesterfield Coldwell Rooms: **Wild Horses**
Dawlish Grand Hotel: **Simple Minds**
Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall: **National Youth Jazz Orchestra**
Glasgow The Platform: **Al Grey**
Great Yarmouth Wheels: **Boy Bastin**
Hanley Victoria Hall: **Klaus Wunderlich**
Hazel Grove Youth Centre: **Spherical Objects/Pedestrians**
Hull City Hall: **Roger Whittaker**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Tarot**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Prince Far I/Bim Sherman/Creation Rebel/Prince Hammer**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Little Roosters**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Decorators**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Billy Connolly**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Skin Deep**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Pinpoint**
London Ilford Kings Club: **Percy Sledge**
London Knightsbridge The Grove: **Free Beer**
London Maunkberry's: **Viola Wills**
London Peckham Montpelier: **Blue Moon**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Dana Simmonds & Greig's Folk and Blues Showcase**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Brian Lemon Quartet**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Shots/Spare Parts**
London Victoria The Venue: **Lonnie Donegan**
London Waterloo National Theatre Foyer: **Grass Roots**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Passions/The Leopards**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Kate Bush**
Manchester Free Trade Hall: **Motorhead-/Girls School**
Newcastle City Hall: **Thin Lizzy**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Gwaihir**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Some Chicken**
Oxford Cape of Good Hope: **Beast**
Oxford Corn Dolly: **Headlights**
Rayleigh Crocs: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Elton John**
South Woodford Railway Bell: **Original East Side Stompers**
Stevenage The Swan: **Dog Watch**
Torquay 400 Club: **The Damned**
Watford Mex's Palace: **The Notion/Passion Killers**
Westcliff Queen's Cabaret Club: **The Drifters (for four days)**
York Barge Club: **Best Friends**

WATERHOUSE

■ *From page 20*

country is of any inspired leaders. "Nobody in politics," says Waterhouse," thinks in any kind of philosophical way. I mean, what is the philosophy of the Labour Party? I know a lot of people have a lot of ideas on what should be the winning hand of the Labour Party, but they're all talking about the survival of the Party as if that is some kind of end in itself.

"The only guy who thinks seriously about politics is Tony Benn. He's popularly regarded as a lunatic, Callaghan is an excellent politician. He's a very good survivor. I don't see what he's for. I don't see his purpose. I'm told he has his finger on the pulse, if that's the pulse, I find it rather depressing.

"I think that in many ways Callaghan is dangerous because the image he projects is of a middle-aged country with pipe and slippers. We shouldn't be that kind of country at all. There is such a thing as a national feeling and the national feeling is this kind of take-it-easy feeling."

Although Waterhouse has in the past worked for the Labour Party, he has never actually taken up membership. He is adamant that Journalists shouldn't belong to things because in the end they're bound to be compromised.

And yet he's a member of the Anti-Nazi League: "That's a bit of an exception, because that's something I felt very strongly about. Martin Webster (National Front supremo) is the nearest thing to a pig a human being can be. I mean, the physical resemblance is frightening. So much so that I'm tempted to poke him in the face."

His past affiliations with the Labour Party didn't prevent him from voting Communist in his last local election either, so much does he despise the Labour-controlled Islington Council.

WATERHOUSE'S latest novel *Office Life* touches on themes he has written about in the *Mirror:* bureaucracy gone berserk and a government whose sole aim is to keep the unemployment figures looking good, regardless of whether those employed are actually manufacturing anything. The work of the company in *Office Life,* the government-run British Albion, is devoted entirely to its own internal administration. Its central character Clement Gryce is a pathetic humanoid who lives for the office.

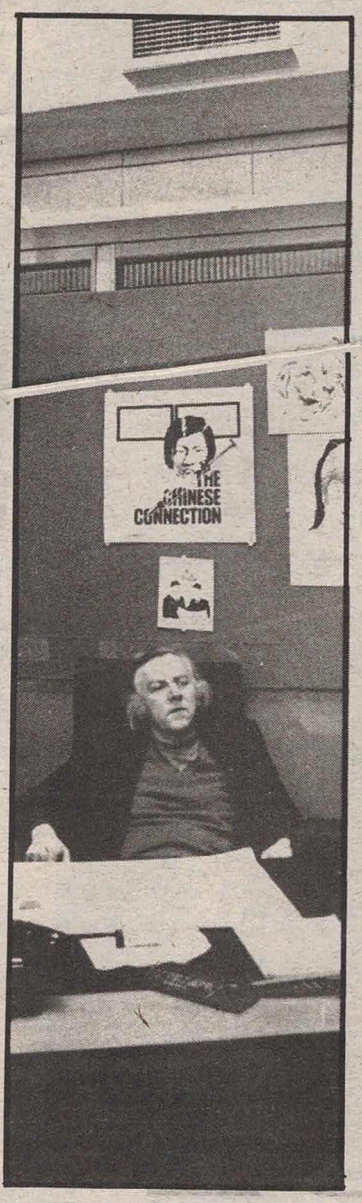
"It's hard to say how long it took to write *Office Life,* because I tend to keep a novel on the boil for two or three years. I let it gestate until I know the story and I know the people and it's simply a matter of writing it. Then I really bash away at it. I wrote most of it between Christmas and April last year. So over a period of four months I wrote about 60,000 words."

A new Waterhouse novel is currently "on the boil". Unusually for him it's about a woman: "I don't know how to describe it in one sentence. She is a sort of a scrubber. She puts herself about. I'm trying to get inside her mind and present her sympathetically. What I want to do is the same kind of thing I tried to do in *Jubb.* And that is to get into the mind of someone who seems an unappealing sort of person and is an unappealing sort of person, but explain them."

When he writes does he feel he becomes the character? "It's difficult to answer that question because I have a part of my mind which is this character. I have a voice because, even when I'm writing in the third person, I always tend to use the voice of the character.

"So what I do is I appear to develop a sort of character in my head and when I'm looking at something as myself I can also be looking at it and describing it as this character would describe it. It's practice, I suppose. I would say things to myself that this character would say in any situation, nothing to do with the book, while I'm writing the book. So while I'm going on I have two vocabularies."

Are his 'heroes' based on people he knows or has known? "Yes, but not one person. They're all pretty well amalgamations. I can't say I consciously take people's characteristics and bundle them together, but when I visualise Jubb I see a particular person."



And how much of him is there in his characters? "I'm always being asked about *Billy Liar* and the reply I always give is that if I was any of these characters I'd be doing 15 years by now. I should think there's something of *Jubb* in me rather than something of me in *Jubb.* I'm sure we've all got that man in the mac brooding somewhere in the back of our minds. Gryce I see as a foreigner because his whole philosophy is foreign to mine. If I were Gryce, I'd hang myself.

"I suppose *Billy Liar* is how I could have turned out if I hand't done anything.

I could visualise myself working in something like local government and making a complete hash of it. A lot of that is in fact based on a friend of mine — still a good friend of mine — who I was at school with and who could never do anything very well.

"He was a jazz musician and he was an artist, but he wasn't a good enough jazz musician and he wasn't a good enough artist. He in fact finished up in The Docks and Waterways Board, which he reduced to total bedlam; the fact was that he only had sufficient organised talent to be a clerk, but all his temperament was totally against that kind of mundane work.

So who are Waterhouse's favourite writers? "I tend to go back and re-read people, which is a rather idle and despicable habit. I like Amis, Kingsley not Martin. There's a sort of set of writers and I cannot think of a single bloody name."

After a moment's thinking, he says that he likes the American school of new journalism in general, though loathes it when it becomes pretentious. He also mentions Tom Wolfe's *The Painted Word;* As a sustained piece of polemic, that was absolutely brilliant." His favourite book of all time is, however, a Victorian novel, *The Diary Of A Nobody* by George and Weedon Grossmith, a book that lampoons the surburban lifestyle.

But his favourite writer is, unsurprisingly, George Orwell. "I'm always reading something of Orwell's. I'm a total disciple. There's a strong Orwell influence in my writing, particularly in the knowledge of statistics. Most journalists don't understand statistics at all. I do. Papers nearly always get them wrong, define them wrong and reach wrong conclusions from them.

"That's a bit of Orwell training. It's remarkable how many things that Orwell, a man with a trained mind, got wrong himself. I mean, *Wigan Pier* is packed with misconceptions. But it's still a brilliant book. Orwell's a king as regards journalism, the essay, so to speak. Technically he's a terrible novelist. The construction of *Keep The Aspidistra Flying* is a shambles, although the content is beautiful."

What are his thoughts on Orwell's *1984?* "I haven't read Anthony Burgess's *1985,* but it's his idea that what in fact Orwell was really talking about in *1984* was 1948; he was simply observing life as it then was. Most of the things he describes are not predictions. They were there at the time.

"There's always been a thought police in various countries. There's now more torture in more nations than at that time. There are now fewer democratic nations than at that time. I think democracy is in a frightening minority. I think there's only about 40 countries in the world where you can go out and elect somebody.

"The interesting thing about *1984* is that Orwell never bothered to think about the way physical life would change. They were still living in Victorian streets. The most *1984* thing of all is the tower block but, except, for the offices, there aren't any tower blocks in the book."

Some have in fact described Waterhouse as a modern day Orwell. There are indeed similarities. Both writers are positively nostalgic, avid social democrats and deeply distrustful of the modern world. But Waterhouse is also a great humourist, as anyone whose read his contributions to *Punch* or either of the *Liar* books will be aware.

If you haven't read him, then you should. Immediately.

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Albums extra

RUFUS
Numbers *(ABC)*
DOBIE GRAY
Midnight Diamond
(Infinity)

The soul machine grinds on.

Rufus are functional funk. Without the distinctive voice of Chaka Kahn, just another competent, discountable boogie 'n' ballad bland-out outfit. There are neat frills — the guitar on one track, the horns on another — but nothing of real substance. The vocals are uninteresting; the instrumental track less than that.

Why anyone should bother with Rufus while The Isleys, James Brown, Funkadelic and numerous disco singles (for example) do the same thing at a far higher level of excellence is beyond me.

There's marginally more reason to bother with Dobie Gray, but not enough to warrant expenditure. He has one of those warm, floating voices which can croon on effortlessly and often does. His music still retains the flavour of his Southern roots, though often camouflaged — as on this album — by indiscreet strings and prettified arrangements.

His trouble has been finding strong songs and there are precious few here. A couple of stabs at disco and a welter of romantic dross — *"You'll be as fresh as the sweet morning dew/Oh, how it thrills me waking up next to you"* warbles Dobie on one song, as if addressing a bottle of distilled water.

I mean. Really.

Graham Lock

MEATLOAF
Featuring Stoney and Meatloaf *(Prodigal).*

Meatloaf gourmets should beware these stale left-overs. They date back to the days when Mr Loaf was strictly corned beef.

The mountainous one is arguably the most successful operatic-style tenor since Gene Pitney and Harry Secombe, but it's not simply the way he sings that makes his music effective.

Principally, it's *what* he sings. On 'Bat Out Of Hell' he had the witty, melodic songs of Jim Steinman, who provided epic arrangements to match the Meatloaf voice.

On this re-release, recorded eight years ago for Motown, there's simply nothing in the same universe. Loaf tries a variety of styles, all to little avail.

Mainstream Motown with 'It Takes All Kinds Of People.' Delaney and Bonnie white soul on 'What You See Is What You Get'. The ponderous schmaltz of 'She Waits By The Window.'

Unfortunately, the heaviest thing on the album is the sleeve picture of our hero. Proof that corpulence by itself is no guarantee of success.

Bob Edmands.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
One Big Happy Family
(Island)

Number 2: That ol' 'Various Artists' manoeuvre. Eight reggae acts, here — Third World, Inner Circle, Bob Marley, Steel Pulse, Burning Spear, Toots & The Maytals, Zap Pow, I Jah Man — low priced, pretty graphics; very appetizing.
Penemunde: Do you think there might be some . . . political reason?
Number 2 (shaking his head): I just don't know, Ian. Ever since that incident —.
Penemunde: You mean —
Number 2: Yes, it's the *'We're all so happy and homogenous here in this romantic ghetto'* tactic; inoffensive middle-range, mix it in there with the Schrieber wall units and spot lamps —
Penemunde: Meaning?
Number 2: Little or no spiritual, political, or social dimension — nothing beyond the . . . Coffee Table.
Penemunde: You *can't* be implying . . .

Ian Penman

TANYA TUCKER
TNT *(MCA)*

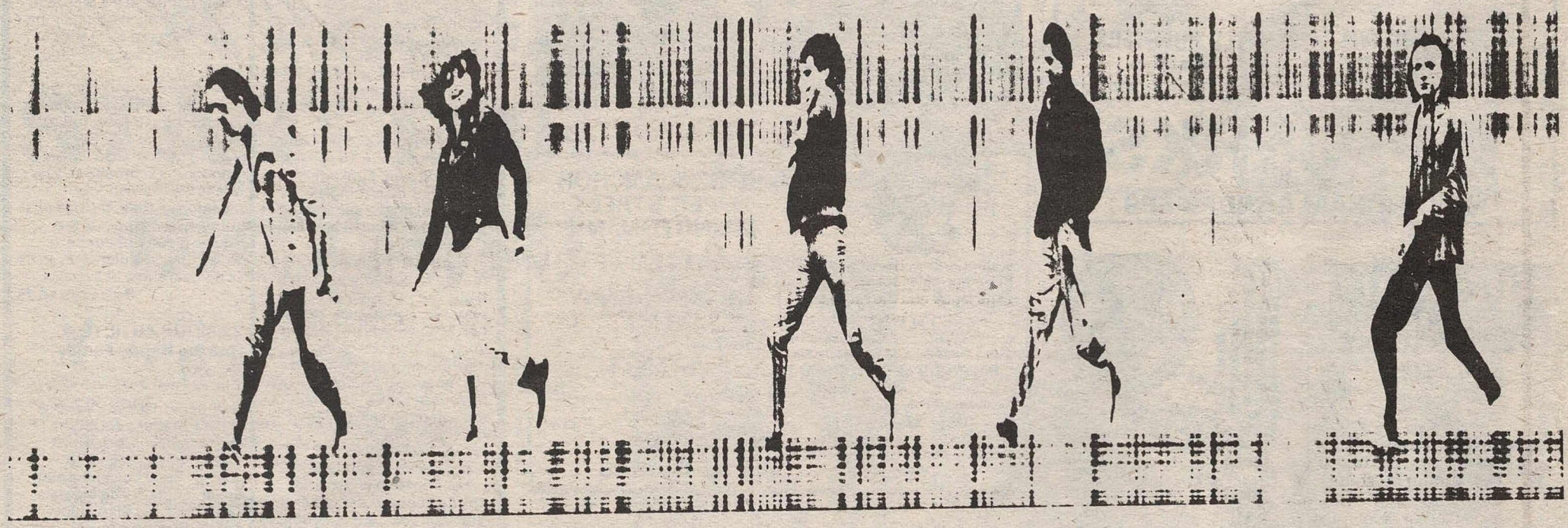
Dishy Tanya Tucker seems full of Western Promise as she poses on the cover oh-so-provocatively with a mike-lead buried in her crotch, but whatever musical talent she has to offer is obscured by the exquisitely boring MOR studio over-production.

'TNT' is a collection of safe, tried and tested middleweight country and rock ballads (e.g. 'Heartbreak Hotel' 'Brown Eyed Handsome Man', 'Texas') — which sells Ms Tucker as a Kentucky-fried conservative Lulu in a lumberjack shirt.

You *can* do better than this, Tanya, canya?

Rick Joseph

MAGAZINE



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ON THE TOWN

Ever fallen in love with a drummer you shouldn't have?

Buzzcocks
Patrik Fitzgerald
Ludus

Hammersmith Odeon

Da-di, it's the weekend. Dum-dum, I've got the 'flu. Saturday night and I wish I was home in bed but instead I'm at the Odeon having my toes trampled by pogoing punkettes. Ah, but this is rock 'n' roll; this is the romance of pop.

But who are this strange group that open the gig?

"We're Ludas and this is our last song," says Linder to ironic cheers. Ludas don't go down very well. I thought them impressive in a tight, heavy, doomy boring kind of way. Imagine Siouxsie Sioux backed by The Voidoids (they do 'Love Comes In Spurts'). I didn't enjoy them, but I'm sure they'll be very successful ... later.

Next on was Patrik Fitzgerald in baggy red trousers, stripey T-shirt and grey trilby. He read a story, chatted to the audience, recited a poem, failed to find a few others and strummed his way through a dozen songs.

His bumbling was irritating, his habit of repeating a phrase at the end of every song annoying, and he didn't sing very well. But somehow he carried it all off.

Highlights were a beautifully timed 'But Not Any More' and a poem 'God On Polydor', which told the sad tale of how the Almighty failed to make commercial songs and was dropped by the label. He ended with 'Hammersmith Odeons', presumably an irony. I thought it was a cop-out he was there at all after recording that song. I guess Pat's just a boy who can't say no.

And so, smoothly and efficiently, to Buzzcocks.

I smiled and bopped at the beginning when they played 'I Don't Mind', 'Ever Fallen In Love' and 'Sixteen Again'; I managed a grin and a jerk at their final slick thrash through 'Promises', 'Orgasm Addict' and 'What Do I Get'. But in the middle I frowned, shuffled my feet and got a headache.

The trouble is that Buzzcocks' solo method of 'experimenting' — of opening their songs — is to throw in a lot of quick-fire guitar chords and mucho heavy drumming by John Maher, who is not exactly a subtle player. He got through 20 sticks and a snare drum and on one of his interminable thump-thump interludes, his 'solo' consisted of the very same riff he'd been hammering throughout the rest of the song. A lot of the time he sounded like he was playing with clubs.

Even at the close, when the group took the easy option of exiting on a string of hit singles, they just seemed to be banging it out and the tunes got lost. At the very end, Maher trashed his drums and Steve Garvey knocked over the mike-stands.

Was this a statement or what? To me it just seemed silly.

Most Buzzcocks' singles are superb pop: catchy little riffs you find yourself humming on railway stations and at bus stops, while the lyrics have that knack of appearing to provide an obliquely humorous commentary on whatever romantic tangle your life is in at the time — a backdrop to the love and times.

But I wonder if they can maintain it. I can't see where they can go.

At the Hammersmith Odeon they were a very professional, one-dimensional pop group with an HM drummer. A perfect fun machine? Well, I didn't get any.

Oh shit!

Graham Lock

The Misfits

Bridge House

A sizeable but strangely reserved crowd have parted with half a quid to see four new wave 'name' musicians backing some dude they've never heard of.

To all but their intrepid leader, these three dates by the hastily-assembled Misfits are just a flash in the pan. Mark Ambler (once of TRB) is on keyboards, John Brown (one of Wreckless Eric's Four Rough Men) is playing bass and Rich Kids Midge Ure and Rusty Egan supply guitar and drums respectively. No expectations, no frills — it's just straight drinking man's rock music; an excuse to sink a few pints.

But for Kelvin Blacklock, whose past excursions with Mott The Hoople, London SS, Tuff Darts and White Cats have denied him any recognition, it's another story altogether.

A mere two minutes into the set his compelling revival of mid-70s rockstar routines confirms he's been the victim of rough justice. Flashes of Jagger bombard the observer. He not only looks like Jagger, he sings and moves like him. The effortless ease with which he leans into the mike stand, flings it skywards and arches his gangling frame, can only result from an unhealthy fascination with full-length mirrors.

Comparisons with the Stones don't end there as the set is a close approximation of their early dirty-sounding rock. And the band stoutly brave the absurd lay-out of the Bridge House, which is three times as wide as it is long, with its PA stacks kept poles apart.

Out of The Misfits' usual contexts, they all play with refreshing enthusiasm and spontaneity. Midge Ure, snappily dressed in sack-like plastic trousers, adds perfect vocal harmonies and some equisitely tasty solos. Rusty Egan is also on ferocious form, belting through a thinly rehearsed set with amazing authority. As Mark Ambler's end of the stage has a different area code, most of his contributions are completely out of earshot.

They reel off 12 numbers, stop, apologise, giggle goofishly and start the whole set again. It's a fair selection from the Blacklock back catalogue: 'Shotgun Lovers' (White Cats), 'Always A Loser' (Mott), 'Wild In The Streets' (first recorded by Chris Spedding), 'Fun City' (Tuff Darts), and even the old Herd number 'Don't Want Our Loving Today'.

The rest, again mostly self-penned, are all welded with the same abrasive force; shamelessly outdated music, but delivered with a stylish conviction.

Exit The Misfits, back to the real world. And Blacklock? There are some people who always seem destined to miss the bus. They're usually the ones who least deserve it.

Mark Ellen

Who's the Jagger of them all? BLACKLOCK. Pic DAVID CORIO.

And they thought that denim was finished. . .

Thin Lizzy

Oxford

Those dreaming spires won't get much sleep tonight ...

The second show of the Lizzy tour sees them in Oxford town delivering the kind of classic act that's won them the major-league heavyweight status for which Phil Lynott has worked so long and hard.

The snag with classics of any kind, of course, is that their perfection is preserved in aspic: magnificent, maybe, but static all the same; TL's act is whole and complete in itself, but it's without the inspiration of uncertainty, the possibilities and potential of the best of their more modern and fallible counterparts.

Progress is out to lunch — will simple power serve in its place?

Well, Oxford says yes. Ever wondered if there really was a market for all those ads at the back of this paper? The denim loons and Sabbath patches, Rush badges and Quo logos? Wonder no more, it's all here this evening and banging heads like they're going out of style.

Swarming forward in kamikaze waves, crashing, crushing stagewards they pile themselves onto collapsing mountains of humanity, thrashing and sweat-soaked, a maelstrom of clench-fisted delirium.

Mind you, they livened up once the band came on.

Indeed the rapport was total, intensified by the relative intimacy of the venue. Lynott seems to straddle the stage, filling half the hall with his grin alone. Pinned to his chest is a Sid Vicious badge and he sports a black armband which, on closer inspection (oh ho-ho, the sly old dog), appears to be a frilly garter.

Swaggering and laughing, he comes on like a regular superstar and yet can carry the whole act off with humour and humanity that transcend the standards of the dumbo brain-crushers who can pass for heavy-metal heroes. And the best of his songs, 'Still In Love With You', 'Emerald' and 'Rosalie' are works of unimpeachable stylishness, flowing with life and character that shame the drip-dry romantics of his rivals.

No doubt about it, Phil Lynott is one of our finest rock'n'rollers.

Meanwhile the ever-elegant Scott Gorham and the pugnacious Gary Moore provide the perfect counterweights to their frontman; their scalding guitar-work connecting beautifully, swirling around Lynott's bass and the tough propulsion of Brian Downey's drums. It's probably the most satisfactorily-balanced line-up that Lizzy have had to date.

'Don't Believe A Word' and 'Baby Drives Me Crazy' stood out as examples of the high-grade hard-rock they invariably produce with ease and excellence.

Okay, fine. Time to wheel in the big *But* ...

Thin Lizzy still entertain, give value for money, come up with the goods every time; but it's a long time since they came up with any surprises. 'Waiting For An Alibi', for instance, is pure stereotype and Lynott's most disappointing effort so far — not the staggered-chorus device lifted from his one great song, 'The Boys Are Back In Town'.

Their career has brought them to the point where, given the HM audience's chronic insistence on familiarity, a little originality becomes a dangerous thing, an unnecessary risk. Lizzy really need do no more than keep on keepin' on for success to be assured. But it would be sad to see the band petrify into just another rock'n'roll institution.

Only four new numbers were ventured tonight: 'Get Out Of Here' and 'Do Anything You Wanna', both standard Lizzy, no better or worse; 'Got To Give It Up', a tragi-comical tale of the demon alcohol; and the more interesting 'Black Rose' — a long and rolling folk-epic that incorporates the American song 'Shenandoah' and some lovely electric-Celtic passenges.

Such innovations were rare touches in a set that was geared to matching expectations, and doing so with complete success.

And the beat goes on, but nowhere in particular.

Paul Du Noyer

Duelling BUZZCOCKS DIGGLE and SHELLEY. Pic CHRIS HORLER.

'Toothless' Tom bites back

TRB
The Straits

Belfast

At the Ulster Hall The Straits are pooling their effervescent post-glam tack in an unsuccessful battle against an abysmal PA, the odd stream of mucous and their own roughshod musicianship. They play too fast, occasionally out of tune and the words are unintelligible.

It's a refreshingly enterprising idea to give a small group like this billing on a prestigious nationwide tour, but judging by this performance they still have a long way to go.

After releasing an album and EP of some of the proudest and strongest music to come from any of the groups to emerge since 1976, The Tom Robinson Band have started '79 with a less than average LP. And as they search for balance in their set tonight, the group's choice of material highlights their weaknesses (for the most part songwriting), instead of their obvious strengths.

Perfunctory stompers such as 'All Right All Night' and 'Black Angel' fill valuable space which would have been best used to incorporate the powerful and evocative 'Long Hot Summer', or the seething vengeance of 'Days Of Rage', the highlight of the new set.

Throughout the set TRB show they've overcome the various line-up changes and can still attack with cohesive economy. It's unfortunate then that such qualities should be wasted on poorly chosen material. It's only with the closing *tour de force* of 'Glad To Be Gay', 'Don't Take No For An Answer', 'Ain't Gonna Take It' and '2-4-6-8 Motorway' that content blends with performance to give a palpable urgency.

These songs more than any others show the full range of TRB's spectrum: 'Gay' is chilling in its brutal anger; 'Don't Take No' a sublimely structured, punchy and dynamic slab of traditional rock; 'Ain't Gonna' an irrefutable declaration of pride; and 'Motorway' is an anglo 'Roadrunner'.

While the more lighthearted numbers are clearly meant to engender a slapstick atmosphere, 'Martin' is one of the few that works. Pianist Ian Parker's solo on 'Law And Order' borders on the ludicrous, and the idea of an extended rap by the hysterical authoritarian figure on 'Power In The Darkness' (Robinson complete with grotesque mask) is unnecessary and embarrassing.

It's a leaning towards satirical theatrics (used to slightly better effect on 'Sorry Mr Harris' when Tom appears with his hair tucked under a beret, wearing shades and an army jumper) that would be best forgotten.

For the most part, presentation is kept clean, precise and simple.

Bathed in bright white light, Danny Kustow and Robinson obviously lap up their roles as ebullient frontmen, often acknowledging their fans with friendly gestures. The criticism that TR is condescending and preaches to his audience is pure bullshit. His approach is unmistakably amiable and sincere, and if he does become cloying it's just the common man attempting to work with honesty in a genre where condescension is a way of life.

His style of delivery is preferable to most of rock's strutting breast-beating studs. And it's as equally ridiculous to say that the message is 'shoved down the audience's throats'; you listen and discard or digest at will.

At their best TRB deliver righteous, cogent rock songs brimming with conviction. Their widespread appeal is underlined by the motley audience they attract at Belfast. From the very young to the over 40s, and from the long-haired to the chains-and-pins contingent, its scope is a tribute to the catholic nature of the music.

It is all the more regrettable therefore that room should be given to the reggaefied interpretation of 'I Shall Be Released' (ethnic emasculation fit to make McCartney's 'C-Moon' blush), the inferior 'Black Angel' (where the acappella harmonies went haywire) and the watery, plodding 'Bully For You'.

But to call Robinson 'a crusader without teeth' is fatuous.

The burden put on the band's shoulders demanded nothing but maximum achievement on their second LP. It didn't come, but the group is still in its infancy, musically their potential is great and their importance must *not* be underestimated.

Gavin Martin

The Pretenders

Liverpool

Eric's is an innovative club where the headliners appear first; ideal for those who prefer to watch the band they've paid to see and then leave, but unfortunate for the support who find their audience greatly depleted.

Another bonus is the matinee for the 15 to 18 year olds. After all, isn't the main part of today's music aimed at the kids who can't always get into the clubs to hear it?

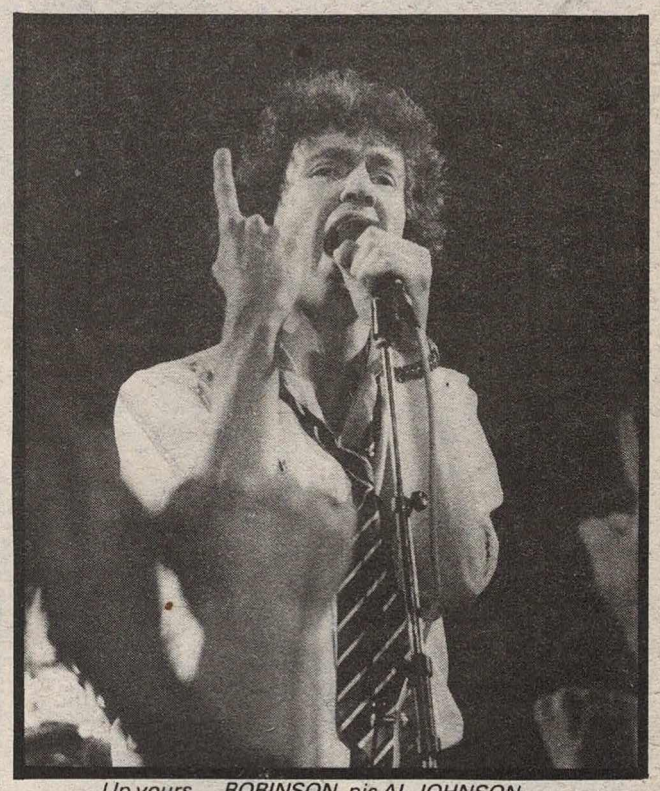
For The Pretenders' early show there were only 40 to 50 people. Perhaps this group appeal to an older audience, because even at the second show there wasn't the capacity crowd one might have expected for such a hotly-tipped combo. But at least the punters showed willing; doubtless a *Top Of The Pops* appearance had played its part.

Opening with 'The Wait', the B-side of their surprisingly small hit, the fourpiece belie the claim they're merely Chrissie Hynde's new backing band.

In ubiquitous black leather and bassist Pete Farndon nattily quiffed and gloriously mean and moody, the band's greaser ambience is marred only by guitarist James Honeyman-Scott's incongruous sports jacket. The lanky Ms Hynde defiantly prowls the stage; an androgynous figure pulling all the classic guitar poses, her mannerisms swagger from Patti Smith to Phil Lynott and she exudes a certain intangible sexuality.

All the songs are relatively distinctive, slickly performed, sometimes bluesy and often with a poppy flavour that would appeal to a palate dulled by too much mainstream rock. And all this is embellished by Chrissie's sensual vocals.

'Stop Your Sobbing' injects a little teen romance, and The Mysterions' 'I Need Somebody' is handled with punchy conviction. Throughout, a particularly placid crowd watch with avid interest but *not* the enthusiasm of their London cousins. The band are politely requested back onstage and not *ordered*.



Up yours. . . ROBINSON. pic AL JOHNSON

The encore 'Sabre Dance', with credit to Honeyman-Scott's guitar work, is performed very much like Love Sculpture and a close look was needed to make sure Dave Edmunds hadn't slipped on. Chrissie is Sandie Shaw on "Girl Don't Come', and that's your lot.

Even if Liverpool didn't witness 'the future of rock 'n' roll', it certainly sampled the delights of a better-than-average rock band. But as for immortality . . .

Susan Fletcher

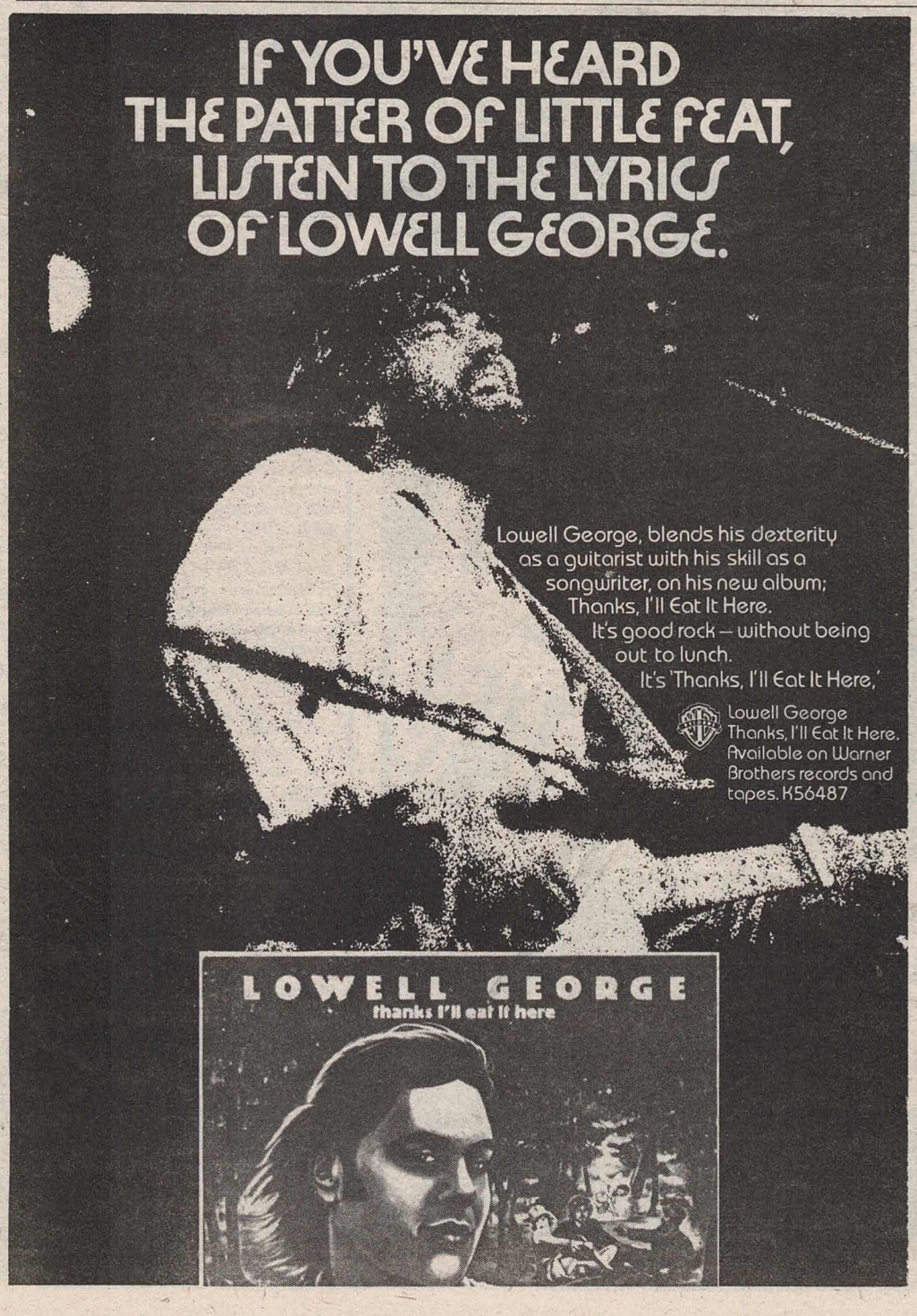
The Ramones

New York

They seemed to have decided to host a Battle of the Bands for the Titans of Punk at the Palladium, for just three weeks after The Clash knocked us out in the very same hall, here were our hometown boys The Ramones back from movie-making in Hollywood.

Although the closeness of these gigs invited comparisons, there were few to be made.

The Clash are defiant, concerned with problems of social order — Johnny may scowl angrily, but The Ramones are fun-loving and safe. The Clash are a realist documentary — The Ramones are a cartoon. The Clash show jarred our psyches and moved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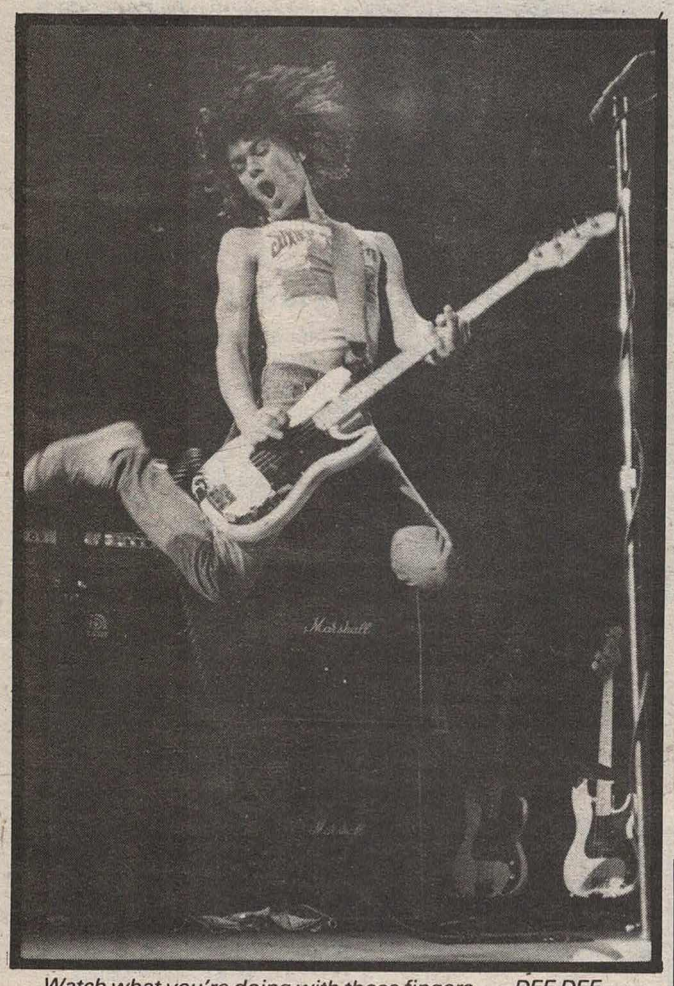
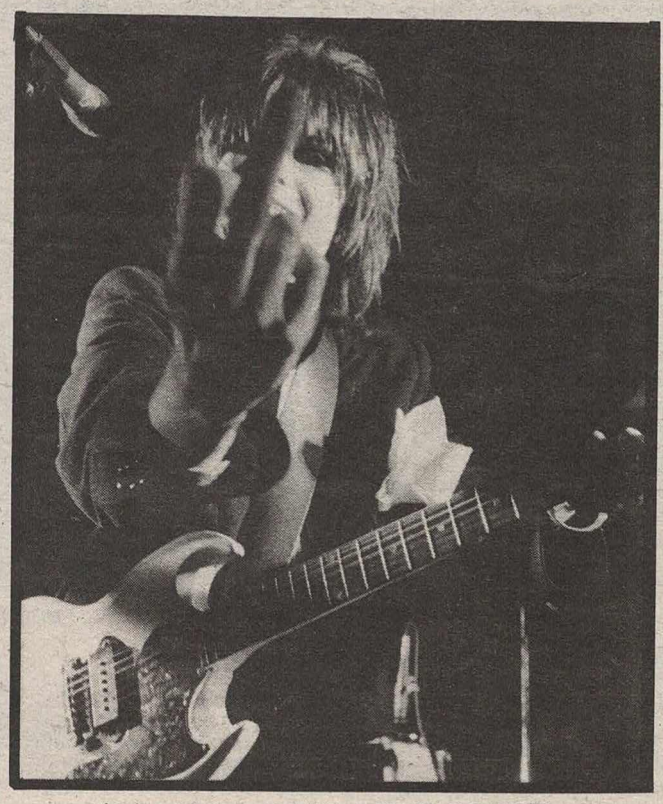


Watch what you're doing with those fingers . . . DEE DEE RAMONE — pic CHALKIE DAVIES



And up yours. . . HYNDE pic KEVIN CUMMINS

our minds — The Ramones made our bodies jump in the air.

The Ramones have now developed their performance to a state of awesome perfection. Song follows song in a nonstop onslaught that is both numbing and exilarating. Dee Dee still does his patented "one-two-three-four" countdowns, but frequently they dispense with even those. They are a hi-speed train that can't be derailed.

The best moments of fun came with their return to the less personalised, headbanging teen-trash anthems of the earlier albums, and they also unveiled the title song of their movie *Rock 'n' Roll High School: "I just want to get some chicks / I just want to have some kicks / Rock, rock, rock 'n' roll high school".*

Joey's blue jeans looked like they had extra holes in them for the occasion (dressing flash for the big gig?); Dee Dee was leaping higher than ever; and the set was long, up to 90 minutes — a big jump for a band that started out doing 20 minutes 'cos that was all the songs they knew.

The boys are also making the militaristic aspects of their performance even more explicit. They began with pre-recorded marching drums; the stage backdrop was their American eagle symbol with the rallying cry "Hey ho, let's go". They're harmless highschool cheerleaders, but they could just as easily be battlefield sergeants as their lockstep performance is more disciplined than a military drill.

Of course the whacked-out eccentricity of their presentation — Joey's goofy-guy persona and their emersion in an eternal teenage world of "piling in the back seat" and "hitching a ride to Rockaway Beach" — belies any *ominous* tones.

So The Ramones are great Americans; but zey are *gut* Germans too.

Dee Dee has developed into a fluid and inventive bass player, and Johnny's strumming is more confident and aggressive. New drummer Marky was bent over his kit as if hiding, but he is up to 'pounding out that beat'. The real surprise is Joey's singing, which has acquired a new eloquence.

But while Joey finds room to experiment, the band sacrifice much of the subtlety they developed on 'Road To Ruin' to achieve a gale-force power. And, despite Joey's best efforts, the characters of the LP's songs are overrun by the demands of The Ramones' rhythmic steamroller.

Innocence is a delicate thing, easily lost. When they allowed the elements of pathos to seep into the portrayals of divine dumbness on their recent record, they were recognising the process of growing older and more reflective. Eventually they will have to find a way to embrace these advances in their stage act.

The Fabulous Poodles, who opened the show, seemed to be out for laughs, but failed to deliver.

Lead singer Tony de Meur affects a Ray Davies style accusatory pose, but his targets are all easy shots and his songs lack the incisive observations that made good Kinks' satire.

On record the essential crudeness of a song like 'Tit Photographer Blues' can be obscured by a catchy melody and clever vocal counterpoints. But live these elements break down and the song degenerates into a one word joke with the word "tit" repeated to the point of nausea. On 'B Movies' the band tried a country groove but missed the swing. Even 'Mirror Star', which sounds great on the radio, came off flat.

In the studio this band wear their multi-track adornments like cute little ribbons; live they sounded pretty shaggy.

Richard Grabel

Writz

Middlesex Poly

Wanderlust brought your roving rockcrit to page six of the *A-Z* to catch a fleeting glimpse of the wriotous Writz. Since they formed last November, this wacky sextet have *son-et-lumiered* around the polytechnics of southern Britain, and tonight they display their Dadaistic doodlings to a sizeable gathering of trainee farmers.

For influences they draw heavily on Salvador Dali and Billy Smart's. Decked out in cheetah skin threads and day-glo orthopaedic macho costumes, they come on like an avant-garde Muppet Show. A cluttered pot-pourri of Disco, cool-jazz and popsicle rock was geared to incite a gala of wally-dancing abandon.

Fronted by the yummy Beverley Sage, a versatile singer given to Dietrichian gotho-vamping and pizzicato squeals, and the bubbling Grouchoesque Steve Fairnie, Writz pumped an infectious mirth and moxie into the corporate corpuscles of punters present. They embellished their act with a boffo pastiche of The Osmonds, and a portentous solo on a Rickenbacker which turned out to be made of latex rubber.

The lucky ones died laughing first.

Rick Joseph

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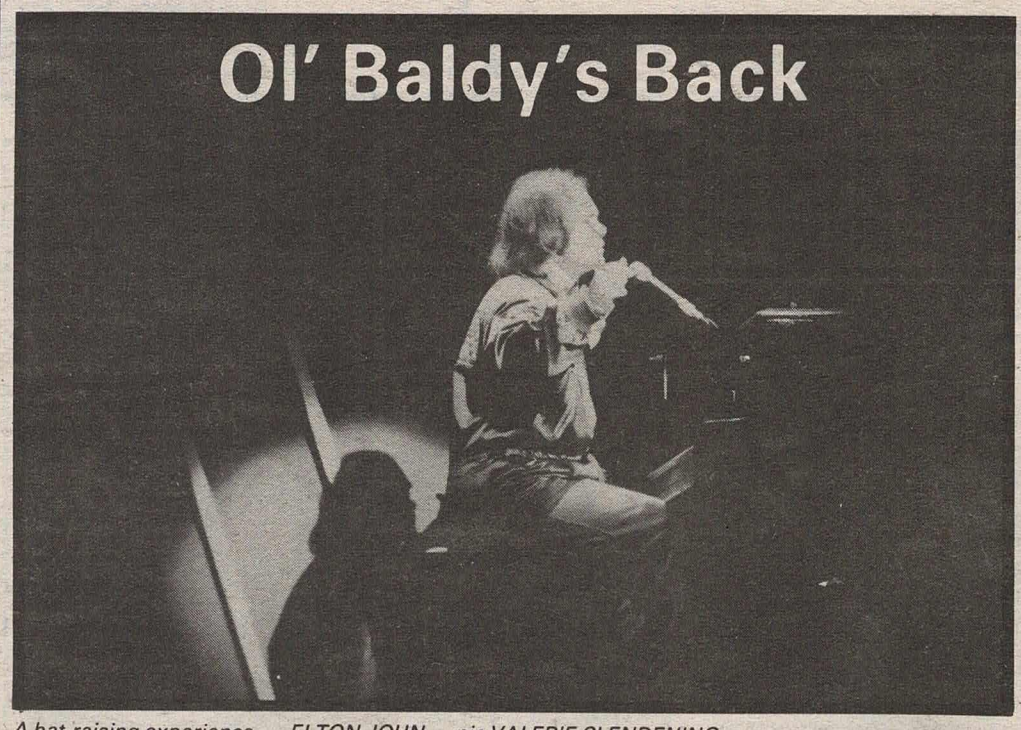

A hat-raising experience . . . ELTON JOHN — pic VALERIE CLENDENING.

Elton John

Glasgow

This is hardly a 'comeback' tour for Elton John but his re-emergence, and the atmosphere is decidely lowkey.

Apart from one grand and an electric piano, the black waxed stage holds only a small drinks table, a few potted plants and a large orange and chrome art deco screen. For Elton himself it's a plain clothes affair — canary yellow trousers, black jacket and gret flat cap. No silly specs, no outrageous costumes; a simple man, in fact.

The first half features Elton on his own. It's an impressive reminder of the depth and strength of his songwriting repertore that he can *start* his performance with a potential showstopper like 'Your Song'.

After such an opening it would be easy to fall into a cabaret run of greatest hits, but Elton accepts the challenge. Interest is sustained by juxtaposing less familiar items like 'Sixty Years On', 'Skyline Pigeon' (as moving now as when 'Empty Sky' was first released) and 'Roy Rogers' with the inevitable crowd favourites of 'Daniel', 'Rocket Man' and 'Candle In The Wind'.

They're all reminders of just how good a singer and pianist Elton John is; as strong a performer as he is a writer.

There are also two brief interludes in the show. The first is unplanned when Elton takes his life in his hands during a power-failure by telling jokes to a Saturday night Glasgow audience — *and* carries it off. The second is for a couple of non-originals: Jim Reeves' 'He'll Have To Go' — the first number Elton ever played as a pub performer — and a long, whooped-up 'Heard It Through The Grapevine'.

So far so good, but so restrained.

The second part of the evening begins when the art deco screen is removed to reveal Ray Cooper, showman supreme, presiding like a benign mad professor over a battery of percussive instruments. Coaxing, cajoling and conducting, Cooper finally brings the rather subdued audience to life and the whole show lifts off.

Musically, the same pattern as before is followed with the rarer items — special praise for a superb 'Idol' from the vastly underrated 'Blue Moves' — mingling with the better known compositions. Aided and abetted by the extrovert but respectful Cooper, Elton goes full steam with a long drawn out 'Crazy Water' rocker before finishing a two hour set with a generous helping of encores.

Great show, great show!

My very first review for this paper was Elton's 'retirement' concert two and half years ago, when I concluded that those in a hurry to write off Elton John were in for a big disappointment and a long wait. Nice to be proved right once in a while, and I'll go for the same again this time.

Ian Cranna

Scottish Monos

Golden Lion

Success came to The Monos when they won the title of "Edinburgh's Best Local Band" last year on their very first gig. Since then, demand for them in Scotland has been great.

But in the south they have to compete with the ("inferior brand") Monos *and* Monochrome Set for the 'Mono' moniker market. Getting critically mauled by Paul Du Noyer on a "bad" night during their last London outing didn't help either.

PDM's criticism was reserved for frontman, Freddie King — a Dury clone, too heavy on stage presence. It's true he has Duryesque head-movements but beyond that, comparisons are unfounded and unfair and I found him highly personable. With his Russian-West Africa parentage, King must contend with Phil Lynott for ethnic credibility.

The band play on the multi-racial aspect of their lineup but stop at spiffy black and white clothes, effective lighting, elaborate graphic handouts and equally contrasting pure pop and reggaefied rock which they call "Power Calypso". With none of Bethnal's heavy-handed social self-consciousness, this is *fun* music with silly lyrics but generally zappy songs.

A layered guitar-echo sound, featured on the perilously pseudo- punky titled 'Sick Of You', could be their distinctive mark as it recurs throughout the set. 'Talking Pictures', their forthcoming single, and 'Nasty (x8) Habits' are also zingy swingers; but 'Swimming Pool' is ridiculous, attempting an 'aural Hockney'.

Writer-guitarist Jamie Watson liberally borrows from The Ramones, and the entire chord sequence of 'Highland Rock' is Petty's 'American Girl'. Otherwise he knows how to construct a nifty tune aided by drummer Brian O'Donnell and lead guitarists Dave Buchanan who resembles Rick Nielson in cap and baggy togs, give or take 18 guitars.

Apart from full-throated Freddie, the attention focused on Winston (Chalkie) Oddoye who stalked the stage with black beret on black head looking like a black panther (the animal) and laying down matching prowling bass lines.

I'm willing to bet that The (Scottish) Monos will translate well into vinyl and that you'll be boppin' to them at some future shindig.

Elissa Van Poznak

David Essex

Hammersmith Odeon

Hordes of screaming, weeping schoolgirls wet their knickers as the cockney rebel breezed onstage, cool as a cucumber, though nowhere near as green.

This bloke's an actor, his part well-rehearsed: the cool, careless pose, studiously sultry expression and slightly raised eyebrow constitute one big patronising ego trip.

Most of the songs were from his new album 'Imperial Wizard' — a steady stream of bland MOR pop/rock requiring no great brainstorm to compose, but enough to make him smile on the way to the bank. His best number was Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Oh What A Circus', significantly the only track Essex didn't write. And 'Twenty Flights Up' brought attention to drummer Trevor Morais; afro aflow, he saved the bands face with skilful, rebellious rhythm domination.

Other than that there was nothing to keep you awake, bar near-hysterical third-formers and trendy young mums throwing gifts onstage to be swept up afterwards.

'If I Could', a lullaby from 'All The Fun Of The Fair' was simple self-indulgence; David crooned dreamily, gushing puerile, simpering lyrics accompanied only by guitars and keyboards. "This song has a special meaning for me," he said in a sad, low voice that made you want to retch all over him. But the kids believed him. It was followed by 'Stay With Me', a beautiful, heart-rending love song that stretched his vocal chords to the limit, producing an acceptable version of a song performed ten times better by Lorraine Ellison.

'Rock On', his first hit, is still a part of the set, technically much improved six years on; as is 'Lamplight' which adheres closely to the first's 'successful' structure.

Of the original David Essex Band only saxist Alan Wakeman remains and the rest are experienced, competent pros with little enthusiasm and few orignal ideas. Arrangements consist of guitar/trumpet/sax/drums mix with a sprinkling of maraccas which constitutes an efficient, economical sound, ideal for those who have little time or incentive to shop around.

Essex finished with 'Goodbye First Love', another heartbreaker aptly save till last and guaranteed to send most of the Odeon audience sobbing to their beds, emotionally destroyed because it was all over and only the memories remained.

Someone wolf-whistled as darling David presented his best profile to the cameras. "Yeah, 'e ain't 'alf pretty in 'e?

Deanne Pearson

Bring back MONOS . . . pic JUSTIN THOMAS.

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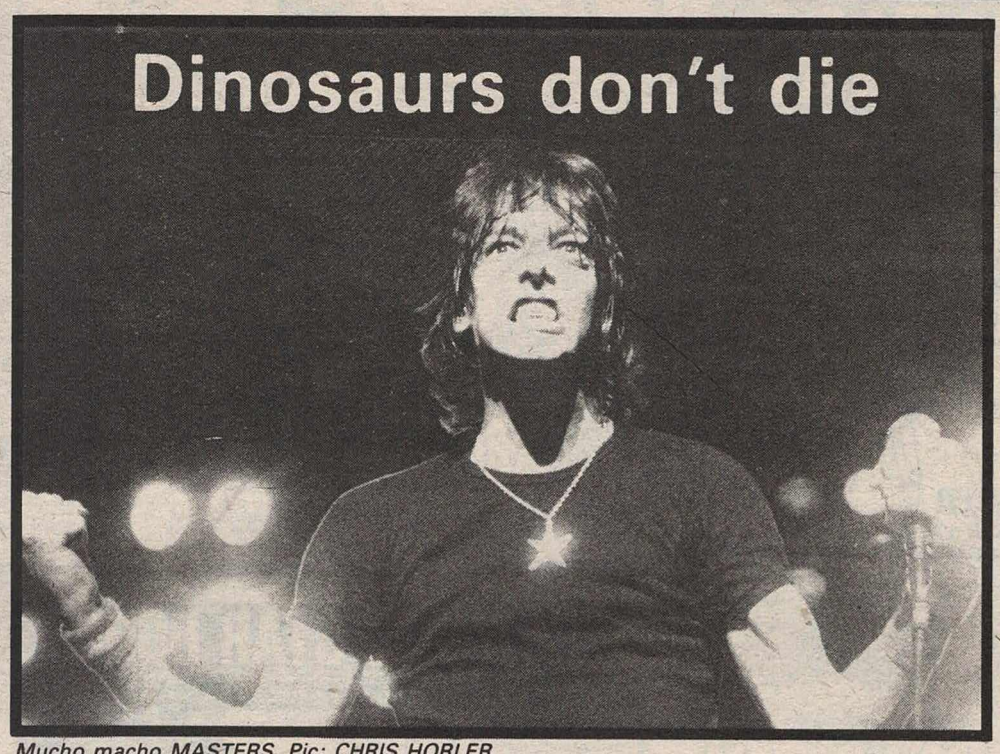

Mucho macho MASTERS. Pic: CHRIS HORLER

Eddie And The Hot Rods
The Members

Rainbow

"The high posing macho, the costumes, the lights ... the lights changing in time to the music! I consider that to be an insult to peoples' intelligence." — Tina Weymouth, *NME*, July 1978.

Eddie And The Hot Rods have plenty of big bulbs stacked behind their amps these days. Flashing, dazzling red, blue and orange, a row of blinding white floodlights — and they all change in time to the music! Rainbow a go-go! *How* impressive!

By the end of their show there is enough wattage being burned onstage to take Blue Oyster Cult through the recording of two dozen triple live sets, enough pretty colours to fill Old Trafford with Rasta album sleeves.

But, sadly, Eddie And The Hot Rods themselves are not a very bright or particularly colourful aural proposition these days. And no amount of gloss can disguise that this was a pitifully perfunctory rock 'n' roll show, played out by a band of artistically redundant dinosaurs. It was remarkable only in its sheer, numbing mediocrity.

What was once greasy R&B is now no more than bludgeoning bombast.

The Hot Rods tread wearily through awfully affected, overblown originals ('Media Messiahs' and 'Power And The Glory') and then ruin great songs like 'Gloria' and 'The Kids Are Alright'; totally swamping the original, reflective brilliance of the latter, for instance.

Barrie Masters' renowned gymnastic frontman antics have much the same effect as the light show — they do absolutely *nothing* to relieve the boredom. Besides, someone who has to rely on mucho macho cockrock postures is never going to be the new Olga Korbut.

And I used to queue regularly outside the Marquee only three years back to lap up this same band.

In 1976, the Hot Rods, more than any other band at the time, first lured me away from the suburban disco-floor to rock gigs in the capital. But times change, values too, and Eddie And The Hot Rods were always doomed to be too short sighted a proposition for these ears.

Take it or leave it? The Rods should knock it on the head.

The Members, by way of contrast, were great.

They played a truncated support set and seemed all the stronger for it, highlighting the best tracks from the album along with 'Offshore Banking Business', reggae that is felt not fashioned, and the spirited here-comes-the-weekend thrash of 'Goodbye To The Job' before finishing up in Larry Wallis' 'Police Car' with X-Ray Spexer Rudi Thompson on searing sax.

With The Members, though, it is not so much the songs, crisply evocative thumbnail sketches that they are; it's the way they sing 'em. Make no mistake, the kinetic, feisty Members — when a few strictly personal internal problems have been resolved are going to be enormous, and deservedly so.

Then their only problem will be whether to become tax exiles or stick with inshore banking business.

Adrian Thrills

Journey
Pat Travers Band

Glasgow

Maybe I'm judging this by the wrong standards . . .

Journey are another American platinum album band. The various members have played with Santana, Focus, Steve Miller and others, mainly at times when those bands were achieving some acclaim. They're still obviously fine musicians, yet I can think of nothing complimentary to say about Journey's music.

An average Journey song starts quietly with a husky vocal, piano or acoustic guitar: the kind of sham-sincere thing Queen do. Soon Neal Schon commences the grinding dirge riff. The band crash in, sounding as tuneful and enjoyable to me as The Slits must sound to a Bo Hansson fan.

John Perry's voice wails over this din like a pterodactyl calling for its mate during a primeval electric storm. Animals in a two-mile radius whimper pitifully. Rats head for the exits. *"Woe Oohoh Woe Oh,"* he sings. Schon steps froward for the low-fretboard guitar solos which sounds like *Star Wars'* battle scene sound effects played at 500 rpm.

Perhaps the proper approach is just to let the sound bleach your brain's painful memories of the working week, then unselfconsciously latch onto whatever fantasy drifts into the vacuum. We may never know for sure, but that's an amateur prognosis of the HM fans playing imaginary guitars. If all they want from music is a palliative, then all the aspiring new wave social engineers may as well admit they're preaching to the converted.

The flash and arrogance of lead guitarists is better represented in special guests, the Pat Travers Band.

These strutting studs in tight white trousers may have been the personification of the rock'n'roll spirit ten years ago, but in more enlightened times such things are completely unacceptable.

The band that time forgot, Travers is as much of an anachronism as Whirlwind. He's a sort of Canadian Rory Gallagher who grew up with Deep Purple and secondhand blues. His music is relatively unpretentious, includes occasional evidence of subtlety and taste and will probably have a sizeable audience for as long as he cares to make it.

As far as I'm concerned both of these bands play the kind of music which forced me to the bargain bins in search of exciting obscurities, pre-'76. On reacquaintance, Travers made me think it wasn't as bad as I had remembered. Journey convinced me I was right the first time.

Glenn Gibson.

JOURNEY in the past . . . *pic CHRIS HORLER.*

Soulyard

Rock Garden

Soul fans — if you want fun, if you want dancing, if you want real soul music played with fervour and affection — your prayers are answered. Soulyard are back in town!

After residencies at the Hope and Anchor and the Pegasus last year, the group took several weeks off to rehearse new songs. The changes work. At the Rock Garden they played the funkiest, most commercial, absolutely best gig of theirs I've yet seen.

The place was packed. The people sweated and swayed. The band blew up a storm. Glorious, exhilarating music you wished would go on forever! 'Move On Up' as celebratory funk; a marvellous vocals/sax duet on 'Shoorah Shoorah'; the hard, shimmering 'Love Rights'. And beside the classics their own songs were just as good: the bright bop bounce of 'Roller Coaster', and the deliciously insidious swoops of 'Love's Demand'.

Soulyard are six people. Ruthie Smith, Benni Lees and Laka Koc share lead vocals and harmonies and play sax, bass and keyboards respectively. Linda Malone (congas) and Nobby Clarke (drums) complete the rhythm section. John Jamieson contributes spare, telling guitar. They work together beautifully, their empathy and enjoyment spilling over into the audience — they don't pose or 'perform', they just *play* and everybody jumps aboard.

Look, I know it's deemed uncool to rave about a little-known band, but Soulyard are just *grrreattt* and to suggest less would do them a disservice. I've now seen them more times than any other group and I still go home with an ear-to-ear grin of stone bliss fixed on my face. Every gig has that get-down party atmosphere — I just can't remember when I last felt such simple and direct *pleasure* in music.

Soul is alive, well and having a ball in your own back yard. Get out there and get on your good foot! Yeeeah!

Graham Lock

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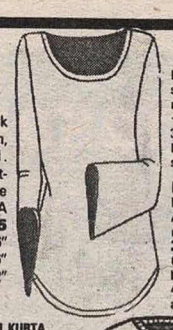

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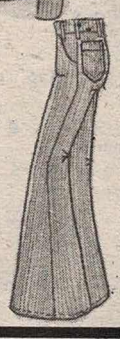

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EDITED BY FRED DELLAR

Why is Jerry Lee smiling?

I HAVE just purchased a copy of the Sun Records' single entitled 'Save The Last Dance For Me', credited to 'Jerry Lee Lewis And Friends'. But the vocal is definitely Elvis Presley! I also think the guitar is Carl Perkins but I'm not sure. Do you know if this record is part of the legendary Million Dollar Quartet tapes? If so, when can we expect an album? — **JOHN ALEXANDER, Perivale, Middx.**

● **Frankly, the only geezer who really knows who's on the Jerry Lee item is producer Shelby Singleton and, shrewdy that he is, he's not letting on. After all, if he says it's Elvis then RCA slap another writ on him — and if he claims it's someone else, then sales will take a nose-dive. Just for the record, Roy Carr, who's just completely a tome on Presley, reckons it *is* El though the whole thing's far too Proby-like from my point of view.**

Since this letter was penned, Charly Records have come up with a Sun album titled 'Jerry Lee Lewis — Duets', which again, may or may not be formed from the Million Dollar Quartet tapes. Says a spokesman for the record company, a proper Charly: "Shelby won't even tell us who's on the disc and just keeps saying 'Ask Jerry Lee'. He's still fighting various court cases — he's had five fights with RCA so far, winning three, and it'll be at least a year before any Million Dollar Quartet tapes, featuring Lewis, Cash, Presley and Perkins, will legally be able to be released."

Meanwhile, Todd Slaughter, president of the Elvis fan club, claims that El can be heard on two or three of the album cuts, though another Presley authority opined that the whole thing was a giant con, overdubs being grafted onto Jerry Lee originals by various unknowns, the Elvis-like portions being provided by one Jimmy Ellis.

Next week, we discuss the mystery of the Marie Celeste, while investigations into Uri Geller, Pyramid Power, the disappearance of Glenn Miller, and the loss of form of Manchester City, all continue.

A postscript to David Midgley's letter in your December 2 issue concerning the member of Gracious.

I was the keyboard player and co-writer with Sandy Davis in the band and am now working for CBS here in Los Angeles. Alan Cowderoy was in fact the lead guitarist rather than the drummer (he loves insults though). Rob Lipson, who played drums, is now successful in the rag trade in London. The band broke up in 1971 and there weren't many spin-offs to speak of, though Tim Wheatley, who played bass, did form a band called Taggett, who made a couple of albums, I think for UA, about a year later. — **MARTIN KITKAT, Los Angeles, California.**

● **Crikey — do you mean that wooden box with strings attached is *not* a drum! So that's where we've been going wrong all these years! Nevertheless, ta nicely for tidying up the loose ends on Gracious, though to set the record as straight as I can on Taggett, they had album released on two labels, an LP called 'Taggett' appearing on UA 29783 in '72, this being followed by an album of the same title on EMI EMC 3015. However, I have a sneaking feeling the latter may have been just a re-release of the UA item — maybe someone could put me right on this. Guess this means yet another letter — perhaps from Colin Horton-Jennings (guitar), Terry Fogg (drums), Tim Wheatley (bass) or Pete Arnesen (keyboards), the foursome who comprised Taggett at the time of their UA recording contract. This bloomin' column is getting to be more like James Burke's *Connections* all the time!**

I HAVE been an ardent Bee Gees fan since 1972. Unfortunately, no music magazine covers any aspect of their careers these days. Could you tell me exactly what the Brothers Gibb are doing these days — whether they are recording or on the road etc? — **KANAN B, Singapore 9.**

● **Whaaaat! Excuse me while I indulge in a touch of the apoplectics. Ah! Now I see it all. The date on the letter . . . December, 1975. I guess it must have got caught at the back of the filing cabinet. Makes you think though — I wonder what *did* happen to the Bee Gees?**

ARE J. J. Cale's 'Really' and 'Okie' albums still available on the A&M label in this country?

ANSWER: he knows the owner of the mystery voice (but isn't letting on . . .).

If they are, could you supply the catalogue numbers? — **P. A. MORRIS, Dudley, West Midlands.**

● **Since Shelter and A&M did a Rod'n'Britt and went their separate ways, Cale's four Shelter albums have been released here on Island. All are still available, the catalogue numbers being — 'Troubadour' (ISA 5001), 'Really' (ISA 5002), 'Naturally' (ISA 5003) and 'Okie' (ISA 5004). You asked for two numbers, we gave you four. Remember folks, you get double value with NME '79!**

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On The Town Extra. . .

Who are you, BETHNAL? Pic GEORGE BODNAR

Right place at the wrong time

Bethnal

Music Machine

Despite recent reports to the contrary, and notwithstanding a current album that flirts with mediocrity, Bethnal play a sizzling live gig.

Take it from RJ, you'll believe a band can fly.

But first some observations on the support bands. Caught just ten minutes of Warm Jets, a thumprock fivesome fronted by the preposterous Paul Ballance. Seeming not unlike George Melly in a Brooke-Bond Tea commercial, he conducted an agnst-ridden soliloquy so drenched in pathos, that I was ready for anything, even The Next. . .

. . .A Liverpudlian combo who opened up new vistas with their unusual hybrid of sub-Roxy melodrama. Fronted by the outrageous Phil Jones, who failed his audition on the encephalograph but cut a fine interpretation of Iggy Pop crossed with Norman Wisdom.

Both The Next and Warm Jets are entertaining bands in their own right whose appeal lies mainly in their idiosyncratic, off-centre approach to live music. You could have malicious fun watching them at eye level in a smaller venue, but their lunatic quotient was largely dissipated in the air-space of the cavernous Music Machine; which was definitely not Bethnal's problem.

Their performance is geared to a maximum assault of power and volume. Although their essential merit lies in their instrumental expertise and solid musicianship, their material is much of a muchness. Take away the dynamics of their live act and you are left with a set of songs which fall short of originality and variation.

That their live show is reminiscent of The Who in terms of energy output is to their credit, but the similarities — contrived or accidental — lead me to suspect that Bethnal belong to the wrong decade.

Having absorbed the abrasive elements of heavy rock circa 1970 and blended it with a new wave thrash-happy flavouring, their set was elevated from being a relentless mittastompf largely through the spirited violin antics of George Csapo. Judging from audience response, the high spot of the evening was their faithfully re-enacted version of 'Baba O'Riley' which did little to change my opinion that Bethnal are in the right place at the wrong time.

Although it may be bad form to critisise a band for what they're not, in Bethnal's case such criticism is constructive, because in other respects they have the makings of a five-star entertainment package.

Lets face it, Csapo is a A Star. Coming on like a cockney Picasso in a threepenny opera, he is in a class of his own

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GIRL VOCALIST also good lead guitarist for good rock pop group, gigs available. No rubbish. Pete 01-642 1147.

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JON BARRIE Name in Print, Happy Birthday, Jace.

PAUL REASON loves Leigh Lampard, Redcar.

TOM ROBINSON Fan would be really interested to hear from someone who made a cassette recording of Jenny Lacey's LBC and/or Nicky Horne's Capital Radio Programme(s), week ending 17th March (I think). If you're willing to sell, your price paid, write Su Bryant, 45 Churchill Road, Bicester, Oxon.

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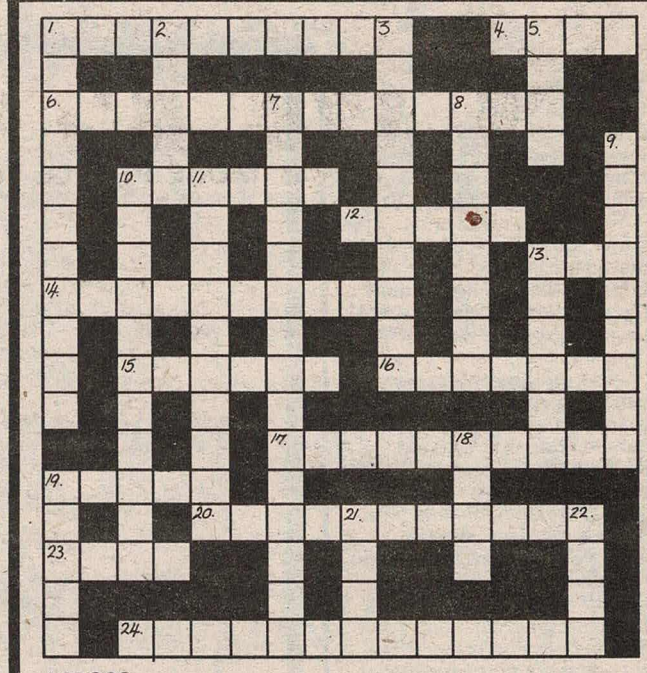

ACROSS

1 Has Art Garfunkel been at the Optrex? (6,4)
4 See 20
6 Found their Mecca near Tottenham Hale Station, discovered heaven in the Seven Sisters Road (6,8)
10 Not Albert but the ragtime Grossman
12 Aussie exhibitionist-cum-bozo sans brain matter
13 Spaghetti-rockers who got signed to ELP's Manticore label (snigger)
14 Capital's Cruising DJ (5,5)
15 '50s U.S. heartthrob, used to make those beach party movies with (sigh) Anette Funicello
16 J.Michel Jarre's all-conquering Euro-platter (yawn)
17 '78 hit 45 for Steel Pulse (2,4,4)
19 A Bowie persona
20 & 4 Early Queen hit (5,4,2,4)
23 Not Percy Bysshe, but maybe his punky offspring!
24 See 11

DOWN

1 Music by P.Gabriel, lyrics by T.Robinson (5,3,3)
2 Darts last 45 (3,2)
3 She's one of the answers in a U.S. quiz rota! (4,6)
5 Make a mess of the dope deal?
7 Classical Motor now with his own outfit (4,11)
8 Not Holmes of Baker Street!
9 "Vincent" was his successful follow-up. After that . . .(3,6)
10 Band LP, or a reference to performers' nerves (5,6)
11 & 24 Nice to know somebody's optimistic (10,5,8)
13 Pattish DJ with Enoch connection
18 Poly's gone down to radiology!
19 As a producer his credits include The GTOs, Wild Man Fischer and Captain Beefheart
21 First lady of the first Velvet Underground
22 Group usually found on rotting foodstuffs!

ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Dire Straits; 6 (Peter) Tosh; 9 Cure; 10 (Rory) Gallagher! 11 "Isn't She Lovely"; 12 Chas ('n'Dave); 14 Solid (Senders); 16 "Waiting For An (Alibi)"; 18 (Graham) Nash; 19 Hank (Marvin); 21 Bill Withers; 23 Cat (Stevens); 25 The Saints!; 26 "(Waiting For An) Alibi"; 27 Records; 28 (Paul) Cook.

DOWN: 1 Dickies; 2 Electric Chairs; 3 "Trash"; 4 "Angels With Dirty (Faces)"; 5 Television; 7 Steve Harley; 8 "Sailing"; 13 (Solid) Senders; 15 (John) Otway; 16 Whirlwind; 17 "(Angels With Dirty) Faces"; 20 Peter (Tosh); 22 Robin (Gibb); 23 Chic; 24 Toto.

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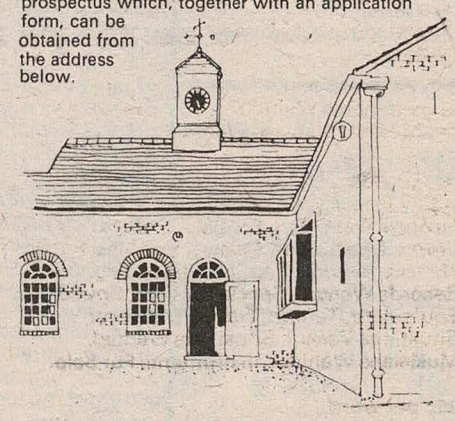

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The death of Keith Moon did more than create a few lumps in the throats of many, it also raised a few eyebrows! Keith Moon died in the same apartment as Mama Cass!!!

You all know that and I know you all think that it is just a coincidence, but it is in fact the culminating factor in the story of the most amazing tragedy-prone apartment in rock music.

After months of research I can bring you the story behind that apartment and the connection it has with the deaths of many rock stars and personalities.

Brian Epstein, the one time Beatles manager, died in 1967. Nothing new in that, you say, until you realise that 1, 9, 6 and 7 add up to 23, which is the exact length in feet of the Mama Cass apartment. Read on — there's more and more!

The great Jimi Hendrix died in the apartment of Monika Danneman in London. Monika Danneman's initials are M.D. and those were the initials of Malkie Dobson, then the caretaker of the Mama Cass apartment! Amazing. . .I could hardly believe it myself at first!

Jim Morrison of the Doors had retreated to Paris in 1971 and there in his bath in July, he died of a heart attack. Little does anyone know that the bathroom in which he died had recently been painted by a firm of French painters — Jean-Paul Genet & Fils — who opened their London branch in 1975 across the road from the Mama Cass apartment. Everything is beginning to fall into place!!!

Pete Ham of Badfinger committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope in his garage. However the rope was bought from "Mike's Cockney 'Ardware" shop, a do-it-yourself shop not far from Pete Ham's house. The D.I.Y. shop had the initials M.C.A. — the exact same initials as the Mama Cass apartment. Wow!!!!

In 1974 Graham Bond died under the wheels of a train in Finsbury Park station in London. My research shows that of the 50 or so passengers on the train, four had actually been to or heard of "Mike's Cockney 'Ardware".

Over in America the amazing tale continues. Janis Joplin died of a heroin overdose and I found out that the person she bought the heroin from had a sister in London who had a friend who often attended parties in the flat opposite the Mama Cass apartment.

Still in America, Gram Parsons died whilst rehearsing in the desert. My notes show that he was rehearsing a song written by Rick Nelson and that Rick Nelson records for the M.C.A. label. Need I say more?

Two final pieces of evidence. Marc Bolan died in a car crash. The garage that sold the car to him once had a mechanic who fixed the faulty clutch on the van owned by Jean-Paul Genet & Fils.

Finally, Pink Floyd — who died earlier this year in a plane crash — nearly bought the Mama Cass apartment to convert into a studio but the deal fell through. The news that Pink Floyd are dead may

YOUR
TROKKOIDS
TROKKOIDS!
The Trokkoids are nine salt encrusted Giraffes. They are concerned with the relationship between metabolic electro biology and years suffused with the memory of Ice cream Cones. They distribute Free Tapes explaining their theory that the evolution of the herrings pancreas is closely connected to the parallel development of Italian Tram line theory. These Ideas are , naturally, propounded in the form of songs.
The Trokkoids have only recorded on one side of these tapes; therefore, they cordially invite you, perhaps with some compadres of similar ilk, to record your own contributions to Western Culture on the other side. Thank you.
'Capitalism for beginners' 'inherited wealth is not unearned, it is earned by somebody other than the person who has got it.' (Daily Telegraph 1975)
Tonto's revenge
A survey on the Vietnam War was taken among Indians living on reservations in America. 15% thought the Americans should get out of Vietnam. 85% thought they should get out of the United States. (1971)
Tory Trokkoids and Monty Smith say:
BRING BACK
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All candidates to NME, 5/7 Carnaby St., London W1

surprise you but my research clearly shows that. . .but that's *another* amazing story!
Norman Towler, Dharan, Saudi Arabia.
That settles it. *Now* will people believe me? — ARTHUR KOESTLER

I would like your readers to know that in a lot of my interview with Tony Tyler (Page 16 March 17th) I was substantially misquoted.

Best wishes,
John Cleese, London W11
Thanks for the wishes, John, but these excuses will get you nowhere. — M.S.

I was delighted to discover, upon perusing last week's *NME Thrills* section, that I had garnered yet another name check in your estimable organ. Such a large one too! But since you were at pains to point out exactly what was wrong with my *Sounds* article on journalist rock stars, I trust you'll grant me some space to set you straight on a few points.

The article was intended as an opinion piece, not a catalogue. I knew about some of the supposed omissions you list, therefore, but didn't feel their inclusion was essential. As for the sarcasm on your part — it may be obvious to you that most people are aware of Bob Geldof's past in journalism, but I'm writing for the 119,000 or so sensible people who pick up *Sounds* each week who've never read your rag, or Geldof's contributions.

Now to inaccuracy — several people told me that your Andy Gill is/was the same Mr Gill who bumps and squeaks in Gang of Four. They still maintain that if this is not the case, then *NME* has certainly gone along with the joke in the past. However, I apologise to both Gills — to the first for implying that he'd work for such a boring paper, and to the second for suggesting that he would twang for such a duff group.

You mention Pete Townshend's occasional journalistic forays . . .but if you'd been able to overcome your outrage at *Sounds* pipping you to the post yet again, you would have taken in the fact that I dealt with rock stars who dabble in print in a single paragraph. Oh, sloppy journalism! You say I mention that Sandy Pearlman wrote for *Fusion* magazine — I didn't.

My bet is that you're just pissed that Patti Smith used to write for *Sounds*, not *NME*.
Sandy Robertson, Sounds
Piss off. — M.S. (no relation)

After minutes of exhaustive study, I was finally able to decode Gunnar Kihlsted's letter (the Bag two weeks ago).

He obviously favours the Bauxonian School (see his predilection for words containing the letter "g"), and it was this tell-tale trait that finally led me to The Truth.

What Gunnar has done is to take Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone', jumble all the letters up, throw in a few full stops etc, then forget the lot. He has then played the new Motorhead album at full volume and written down what he remembers of the original concept.

"I don't want to get stuck in this mess". . .Doesn't it just *reek* of "There must be some way outa here"!

I could be wrong.
Gunnar Rommelwho, Scandinavian Decoding Centre, Horwich, Greater Manchester.
Half-a-pound of turnips winner. — M.S.

So Tom Robinson fails as a revolutionary leader does he, Morley? When was the last time 80,000 people were motivated to oppose the NF by you?
No Name, the friend of the bloke who slashes himself with smashed light-bulbs and failed his English.
You surprise me, No Name. But let's get this Morley matter into perspective. — M.S.

Dear Cathy & Claire, I have this problem. You see, I keep making silly statements such as "Stiff Little Fingers are the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world" when, months ago, John Peel and various other people had already jumped to that conclusion after hearing 'Suspect Device'. Also, I keep slagging Tom Robinson off for trying to change the world when he's only trying to make an honest living playing his kind of music. Please help me, I'm so desperate. Paul Morley.

Dear Paul, we suggest you give up journalism and take up a profession in which you can make silly, outrageous statements (try politics). Love, C & C.
Miss R. Fairclough, Keighley, W. Yorks.
It's not really all Paul's fault. You'll have to expect this sort of er, 'eccentricity' from a man who supports Manchester City. — M.S.

I think the lead singer of The Skids looks like Burt Campbell from *Soap*. Does this mean I can become a famous rock journalist?
Deirdre Langton, Coronation Street, Weatherfield.
Hey, Neil! I think we've found a replacement for Morley. — M.S.

I am writing regarding the increasing violence at concerts, having just been to see The Buzzcocks in Blackburn. All the male members of the audience were body-searched before entering. This is presumably a necessary precaution, yet it ruins the atmosphere at a gig. But what I find most aggravating is the throwing of missiles, especially full beer cans / bottles at the group on stage.

Pete Shelley was obviously upset and rightfully angry. He attempted to explain that they were there to do their job to the best of their ability and we — the audience, having paid — deserved to hear good music. The stupid cretins who find this kind of thing amusing or invigorating ruin concerts for the majority.

There aren't many interesting things to do in Blackburn and obviously a good brawl for £2.25 is a bargain.
Lynn Gordon, Clitheroe, Lancs.
I really don't understand the mentality of those 'cretins', as you put it, Lynn. Surely a quid's worth of aggro down Ewood Park is by far the better bargain. — M.S.

Last year's *London Guide* said that the Avenue pub had a jukebox and Ruddles real ale. It hasn't.
Julia's friend (from the Deep South).
Fair enough. — M.S.

I think it would be appropriate if, as one of their "images", Village People had a Village Idiot.
Steve Harrington, Luxembourg
At last! A sensible one — and cute as hell, too. — M.S.

Am I the only person who thinks The Fall sound like The Stranglers?
The Lone Ranger, Brierfield
It would appear so. — M.S.

Sorry to disappoint Kim of Cardiff, but I hope *this* is the last letter about Julie Burchill in *Gasbag*.
Mick, Preston, Lancs
We've been expecting that one. — M.S.

I don't know who killed Bambi, but I know who nearly killed our goldfish, Rover!
Ruby, Aberystwyth
Saw the film. Loved Ben, hated Hur. — RUSS MEYER

Dear Melvyn Bag, I think your show is wonderful, you should put it into print.
Frosty Buttocks, France
Thankyou, Froddsy. — M.B. (for it is he — *and* his sinus.)

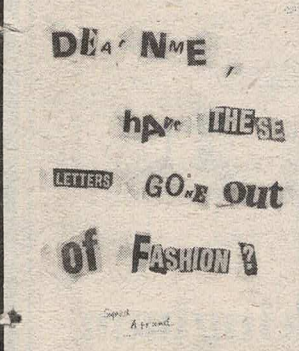
Will you tell *him* from the Buzzcocks (bass) that he will never be as good as J. J. Burnel.

So stop trying to take J. J. Burnel off.
K. D. Ibstock
Quite tough ...

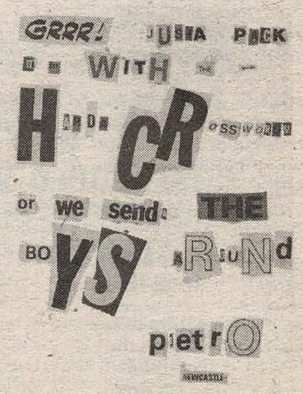
On page 24 of Amy Cruse's *The Book Of Myths* the letter 'o' appears exactly 104 times. On 12 occasions there are two 'o's in one word. However, in only five of these words do the 'o's appears side by side ...

So quit slaggin' heavy rock you bastards!
Mario Kempes, Leigh, Lancs
... but not tough enough. Mario wins on points and laughs at Osvaldo's haircut. — M.S.

I hope I never see the word "penis" on the letters page again.
J. Genet, Weston-super-Mare.
Prick. — M.S.



A heart-rending plea from G Drake of Norwich, answered stage right.



T-ZERS

TAKES A LESSON IN UNSUCCESSFUL CLONING

So some bright spark at A&M Records has this bright idea to promote Joe Jackson on his inaugural trip Stateside: 'Let's have a JJ Lookalike contest' he declares (press office faint with delight, chairman raises salary etc). So in Washington DC up turn the 'lookalikes' — men with moustaches, men without ties, girls with flaming heads of hair . . . so what is it with these yanks, asks T-ZERS, are they blind or dumb or what?
Joe judged the, er, 'lookalikes' as they mimed to 'Got The Time' (see inset for reaction) and awarded the $250 cash prize to Llyell Lloyd (he's the one in the trilby on Joe's left). We presume the bright spark at A&M lost it from his salary..

. . . O' course the whole thing was finished as soon as those loose horses careered across the leaders bringing down Godfrey Secundus with my 40 pence on its rotten nose! And I didn't even hear Churchtown Boy when it went! If you ask me the whole thing i . . .

Oh, oh — started have we? Alright, just give us one second to straighten up here . . . alright . . . OK . . .

The spirit of **Ethel Merman** beats still in the breast of today's troopers! By the wonder of modern travel we are in Cork where at the climax of his set **John Cooper Clarke** got a foot entangled with some stage wiring and tumbled headlong from the boards — what we doctors are wont to call the Pattiola Smithuss syndrome. Anyrate, JCC clambered up and behind stage with his hand and wrist wracking him with severe gyp, yet fought off the torture to complete two encores before rushing to hospital to have the extremity diagnosed as broken and get it heavily strapped. "I was in agony," frothed the nasal one . . .

And while on the JC line, let it be known that those hoary old hams **Chas & Dave** can be heard supplying the business behind a brace of ads for John Courage Best Bitter. They have bent the words to both 'I'm In Trouble' and 'Gertcha' to fall in line with the product in question . . .

Warm natured, lovable **Chuck Berry** reveals in *Gallery* — a men's stroke book — that in all his life he has only ever purchased six albums, two of which were his own product. Without revealing the mystery four others, Chuck opines that should he hear a cut to tickle his fancy he's satisfied to merely take a tape from the radio. It's our suspicion that at least two of the dark quartet were **Jobriath** elpees, and possibly a copy of 'The Great Fatsby' . . .

That other great fashioner of '70s rock'n'roll, **Aerosmith's Steve Tyler,** celebrated his 31st birthday by visiting his money in its Boston bank — and that's a fact . . . but when you hear that the **Kiss** solo albums are being returned to Casablanca in figures not unadjacent to a million dollars you begin to think that maybe Steve's got the nod from somewhere and went down to his branch of Barclays to make secure his wads with a tarpaulin and rope. Sooner or later me old china's, sooner or later . . .

Mind you, don't wait up or nothing. We receive news of **Rod Stewart** selling out Madison Square Garden for his four night concerts in June . . .

Now back to Earth, and they don't come earthier than **Sham 69.** After the showing of the *Arena* documentary the **Jimatollah Pursi** cornered our own saturnine **Paul Rambali** and, in his usual softspoken manner, outlined the next step in his UK domination scheme. It seems that a studio knockabout which resulted in a clever, if not subtle, version of **Public Image's** eponymous waxing — called 'Public Pisstake' by **Joe Public** and digging Mr **Lydon** out on several points, Seditionaries, THAT LP etc — has inspired the Hersham hollerer to draw up plans for a film that'll concern itself with the difficulties of staying true/alive with your audience — a scheme Pursey first whipped out during his emotional burst into an *NME* staff editorial a couple of weeks back . . .

Currently James is under the influence of *The Deer Hunter* and expressed to our cowering scout a whim to create his own proposed magic lantern in the same mould. An acquaintance writes: "Nothing can stop the Jimitollah now . . .

While in the realms of fallen arches we can wave in the immense size 12s of the Towering Inferno Mr **Joe Jackson.** Joe was clubbing it at Hurrahs in New York to celebrate his signing to the William Morris Management Agency — who also manage **David Bowie** — when the man from the agency said to Joe, "hey let me introduce you to David B—", as these folk like to do. Yet when Son of Jack stuck out his mitt, the enigmatic one walked straight on by . . .

Just 50 yards down the road **Sid Vicious's** lawyer **James Merberg** was sprouting about the dead one. In his opinion Ritchie was "a bit of a mixed up kid . . . on the day of his release he was straight as an arrow, detoxed from everything, including methadone. A case of not guilty instead of a psychiatric defence would have been offered at trial . . ."

Back home **Sid's mom** has been remanded on bail until April 17 . . .

While they were both in London, **Van Morrison** laid down vocals to a **Zappa** song, 'Dead Girls In London' . . . Meanwhile **Nils Lofgren** (remember him?) wrote three songs for the upcoming **Lou Reed** album, which might be called 'Bells'. Y'know there's a kind of sunspoiled innocence about *T-zers* of that fettle, far better stock than the shuffling, pimpled mob with shifty eyes that waits for its chance to subvert these days . . .

Kop this. Liverpool boss **Ian Parsley** after last Saturday's thrills'n'spills ruck with Man Utd: "Y'know, people talk of drugs in soccer these days, but that game was like a drug! It was like pot. You just want more and more of it!!" Whatever became of the half-time orange? . . .

Sandy Pearlman in running again for **Clash** management. There! Snuck that one in sharpish, eh . . ?

And You Thought You'd Escaped Dept: **ELVIS COSTELLO** (FX: Wild cheers, sobs, Halleluja chorus) — yes, Elvis Costello had a hectic April 1st if everything went as planned. Our very own horn-rimmed toad — a tiny jokette Elv — had hoped to complete three gigs in three separate halls on the same day. He would start at the Palladium, then onto The Bottom Line and from thence to an unnamed location to wrap up his feat of dashing. At press time his success was unknown . . .

Beat this!! Essex DJ **Mickie Gee** not only claimed a new world record for his 1,500 hour non-stop disc jockeying session — in Reykjavik, Iceland — but the grand chap raised £7,000 for handicapped children. . .

Those sons of fun **Village People** are to plonk it all on the table in a photospread for *Playgirl* — a female stroke mag. Plus they replace **John Travolta** as **Olivia Newton OBE's** leading hunks in her new picture, which as of now is kindatitled, sort of, *Hot New Yorkish*. And remember you read that here first . . !

We apologise for any readers experiencing 'the bends' during the sharp change of matter between the following item and the preceding ones: At Dingwalls, **The Members' Nicky Tesco** leapt 'pon stage to cut himself a slice of **Local Operators** action . . .

And some things never change. San Francisco 'punk' band **The Nuns** have gone into the studio to play down their masterplan for Yank anarchy. At the controls will be **Peter Frampton.** Oooh, you wicked, naughty boys . . .

The mutual kiss-kiss continues. **Al Green** was so chuffed at **Talking Heads'** rendering of his stalwart 'Take Me To The River' that he is currently getting a lug around some of the Heads' material, with a view to buy . . .

You wouldn't know this but at regular intervals throughout this thesis of the trivial, *T-zers* has received some very sharp blows from a long pointed stick. Accompanying this spiteful act have been a chorus of whispered messages hissed through clenched teeth. This is a typical exchange: (Poke) "For God's Sake give a mention to the **Eurovision Song Contest.** (Poke) We're a music paper for Chrissake! Just slip something in, we can't just ignore it! We'll be accused of being snobs! (Poke. Poke) Just mention that Israel won it on their home turf and we blundered into something like sixth. OK? Yes, well I was watching *Patton* and the **Marx Bros** too, but give the impression we had somebody on the case — make a joke out of it — anything for crying out . . ." Naturally *T-Zers* will not be provoked by any of this baiting. . .

And so onto the last business of the day. Ladies and Gentlemen, our employee of some seven summers, Mr **Steven Clarke,** has jacked it in. Steve joined the paper in 1972 as editor and forged a path of blood, sweat and tears that led to his dismissal as our messenger last Friday. There were many times when lesser men might have quit, but above all Steve had that quality that sets apart all great men, that something special that made us realise what a rock he could be. His writing? No. His wit? Nope. His optimistic disposition? His boulder-like attitude in the face of increasing odds? Nah. Come on chaps, let's face his desk and salute this behemoth. Let's face it. Steve could make coffee like a sonuvabitch.

G'bye ol' pal! And at the White Hart last Friday we drank Steve Clarke's good health. Some of us a little more vigorously than others. **Neil Spencer** is 73 . . .

BETTER BADGES

TOP TEN

This week		Last week
1	Stiff Little Fingers	(2)
2	The Skids	(3)
3	Clash Police	(1)
4	Gang of Four	(—)
5	PIL	(5)
6	Members	(8)
7	Mekons	(9)
8	999	(—)
9	Jam (Red)	(4)
10	Smirks Against Travolta	(—)

NEW RELEASES: 25p Destroy All Monsters, D.O.A., The Pretenders, T.V. Personalities, Dodgers, Bette Bright, The Fall. 20p Scars, Stiff Little Fingers, Nicky and the Dots, Teen Beats, Throbbing Gristle, ATV Vibing, Les Feles.

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Brian B 1,000-1
Jeremy Bunnies 1,000,000-1
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"Well I'm six foot nothing
of muscle and bone
With my colt 45
I weigh seventeen stone
Got a stetson hat
and a big cigar
And I clean up trouble
with my little tin star"
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